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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Vol. 32, No. 1

JANUARY, 1949

	PAGE
Twentieth Century Louisiana <i>by Dr. G. W. McGinty</i>	5
A Social History of St. Mary Parish, 1845-1860, <i>by Jewell Lynn de Grummond</i>	16
General Banks' Red River Campaign, <i>by Richard Hobson Williams</i>	103
The Freedmen's Bureau of Louisiana, <i>by John Cornelius Englesman</i>	145
Historical Documents—A Letter from the Battle of New Or- leans from John A. Fort. <i>With Introductory Note by E. A. Parsons</i>	225

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TWENTIETH CENTURY LOUISIANA*

by DR. G. W. MCGINTY,

Perhaps it is somewhat presumptuous on my part to reiterate to you some of the changes in Louisiana during the past half-century. Experience has taught me that human beings forget rather quickly and that our memory needs refreshing from time to time. I shall endeavor to emphasize the social and economic changes and to make some appraisal of the political. Of course you understand that time will not permit even a cataloging of all the economic, cultural and political changes and I shall, therefore, be compelled to select, knowing full well the liabilities involved in such a procedure.

Since we must have a beginning, why not take note of the population changes first. The white population of our state exceeded that of the Negroes in 1900 for the first time in many decades, and the 1940 census revealed that the ratio was almost two to one. It would be safe to assume that there are twice as many white people as Negroes today. This relative decrease in the colored population is due in part to Negro migration to northern industrial centers and in part to the higher death rate among Negro children. The total population of the state in 1900 was 1,381,625 and the estimated population in 1946 was 2,519,520.

In 1900 only three cities had a population exceeding 10,000; today we have three cities each with more than 100,000 people.

* Given before the Louisiana Historical Society at New Orleans.

New Orleans has more than doubled its population in the past fifty years; Shreveport has increased more than five times; Baton Rouge about eight times. Monroe, Alexandria, Lake Charles, Lafayette, Bogalusa, New Iberia, and Gretna each had a population in 1940 in excess of 10,000. Seventeen cities had between 5,000 and 10,000. These cities had become centers of new industrial developments, or they were important railroad and highway centers. Notwithstanding this urban growth approximately three-fifths of the people still lived in rural communities in 1940.

Some of the old towns had decayed or the population remained practically stationary. Such towns included Arizona, Clinton, Grand Coteau, Vienna, Greensburg, Columbia, Harrisonburg, Bayou Sara and Madisonville. Their lack of growth was generally explained by the railroad missing them, by the decline of river trade, and by the lack of industrial development in their immediate vicinity.

The changes in living conditions have been even more pronounced than population changes. The automobile has brought paved roads and free bridges and these have increased the ease and speed of travel and transportation. Many people prefer to travel in their private automobile because of the convenience. Then there are the public busses and motor freight lines which cover the state today. The roadside gas station is seldom out of sight of the motorist.

The coming of the airplane has stimulated the construction of airports in all the important towns and cities. With thousands of pilots trained in the recent war it appears that most of the mail and much of the distant passenger travel will be by airplane. An increasing amount of our valuable perishable products such as strawberries, oranges, fish, *et cetera* will be transported to northern and eastern markets by air.

The telephone has made it easy to converse with neighbors as well as to speed up business transactions. The radio has, likewise, brought the activities of the world to the fireside of the average inhabitant by the mere turn of a dial. Numerous labor saving devices have reduced the manual labor in the home, in the business office and in the industrial plant. Rural free mail delivery has

brought the post office to the door of most of the rural population. It no longer requires a trip into town to get the mail. Most of the towns and cities have developed better water supplies and sanitary sewage disposal. The rural electrification projects are rapidly bringing electric lights to rural people, which in turn enables them to have running water and bath tubs in their homes the same as those who live in the cities and towns. The rural homes that are not near enough to the power lines can purchase individual electrical lighting units. Either artificial or natural gas for cooking and heating purposes is available to many rural areas and to practically all the cities and towns.

The diet of both rural and urban dweller has improved as a result of the almost universal practice of canning foods in season by most families. The home demonstration agents have aided in the program. Refrigeration service has been another factor in enriching the daily diet. Ice refrigeration has been superseded by mechanical refrigeration in most food stores and in many private homes.

The people are enjoying new amusements. Perhaps motion pictures have had the greatest attraction, and in recent years the silent pictures have been made into "talkies." Practically every town has its motion picture theatre and the automobile and good roads have placed these commercial amusements within reach of most of the population.

Public education made little progress prior to 1900, and the real development has been since 1910. Compulsory attendance laws were found necessary to get some of the educables into the classroom. The poor parents have had the burden of education lightened for them by the free school books law. The automobile and good roads have made consolidation of schools possible where better trained teachers, and modern library, laboratory, and classroom facilities are available. The progress has been so rapid that today, the one-room rural school is practically a thing of the past. Public school opportunities for Negroes lagged behind that of the whites, however, much progress has been made toward equalization in the last two decades. In 1940 there were 332,126 children between six and thirteen years of age and 92.4 per cent of them, or 307,045 were attending school.

Prior to 1900 free public high schools did not exist outside the larger cities. That meant most secondary education was carried on in private academies or academies conducted by religious denominations. In addition to these all the colleges and universities maintained preparatory departments. The movement for public high schools was instituted during the first decade of the present century and was strengthened by the consolidated school program. The transportation system has placed every boy and girl, prepared for secondary school work, within reach of a public high school. Better trained teachers, better equipment and facilities have raised the standards and quality of work done in our high schools. For a number of years our high schools made the mistake of placing the major emphasis on preparation for college entrance when only a very small percentage ever entered college. This error is being corrected today with the introduction of vocational courses into the curricula. The result is that the public high school is becoming more popular with the masses. Another result has been a decrease in the number of private academies and church supported academies. There were 329,705 white and 188,139 Negro children enrolled in the public elementary and secondary schools in 1947, taught by 13,784 teachers and housed in buildings valued at \$83,018,515.

The growth and development of higher education was dependent upon the elementary and secondary school system. Hence higher education tended to lag behind the growth of the public schools. Thomas Duckett Boyd headed the State University from 1899 to 1929. The Greater Agricultural and Mechanical College was begun in 1925, which was later turned into a greater university. Dr. James Monroe Smith headed the university from 1931 to 1939 and spent over \$13,000,000 on the physical plant. In 1946 the university had 521 professors and 10,603 students. Its growth suggests the pattern of growth in the other colleges. In 1946 there were 19,819 white students enrolled in the colleges and universities and 4,345 students attending the Negro colleges and universities.

It is now in order to consider the economic changes. The value of all farm property in 1890 was \$110,447,005 and had

increased to \$513,000,000 by 1946. The value of farm machinery increased from \$7,167,355 to \$61,321,449 during the same period. The farmers had a cash income of \$263,167,000 in 1946.

Cotton production today is approximately one third of what it was in 1900. The appearance of the Mexican boll weevil had some effect but the big factors in the reduction were the diversification movement, the cost of labor, soil depletion, and competition of other world areas in growing cotton. For years cotton seed was considered a nuisance especially around the gin houses but the building of cotton seed oil mills changed this and cotton seed had a value of \$13,000,000 in 1943.

Sugar cane, another valuable farm crop, has had an up and down career. The removal of the bounty on sugar by the Wilson-Gorman Tariff in 1894 caused the organization of the "Lily White" Republican party in Louisiana, and the "sugar bowl" has had a Republican flavor ever since. The 1942 crop was 922,000 hogsheads and four years later 5,000,000 tons of sugar cane were processed for sugar making.

Rice production on the prairies of southwest Louisiana made great strides in the 1890's with the coming of railroads, irrigation, and the introduction of such machinery as the reaper and binder for harvesting and the steam thresher for separating the grain from the husk. The combine has been used in recent years with success. A potent factor in promoting the Louisiana rice industry has been the Rice Association of America. This organization was created December 11, 1901 at a meeting in Crowley. It has endeavored to increase rice consumption through clever advertising. The production today is around 25,000,000 bushels annually, with a value of \$40,000,000. The rice industry had \$11,565,513 of capital invested in irrigation facilities in 1940. The system included 2,421 miles of canals, 105 reservoirs, and 502 wells to irrigate 450,000 acres of rice lands.

Corn has never been much of a money crop in Louisiana, nevertheless, it is the most valuable grain crop. Most of the corn is consumed on the farm where grown and practically every animal on the farm consumes corn in some form. It was and still

is an important item for rural people and it is served in various ways. The production averages between 20,000,000 and 25,000,000 bushels.

Truck farming has expanded in many sections of the state and has been aided by the development of transportation facilities. Refrigeration cars carry our vegetables to distant markets. Vegetables can be grown the year round in the southern part of the state, and with paved roads and modern trucks no point is too distant to be a potential market. The Irish and sweet potato crops are coming to be money crops. Other vegetables that might be mentioned are: cabbages, carrots, lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, onions, watermelons, turnips *et cetera*. The citrus fruit crop should not be ignored, for it is expanding rapidly. Our oranges have an unusual flavor and our strawberries are known over the nation.

The livestock industry is usually considered a fair index to the agricultural situation. In 1946 the state had 132,000 horses, 142,000 mules, 1,574,000 cattle, 192,000 sheep, and 739,000 swine. Within recent years better care has been taken of stock and better breeds have been introduced. A drive was launched in the 1920's to rid the state of the cattle tick, which was a menace to the industry. There was strong opposition to the dipping of stock in some rural areas but the program was adhered to. The number of milch cows has doubled in the last fifty years and there were 368,000 in 1947. The number of cows does not tell the full story for the cow of today produces from four to six gallons of milk per day, whereas the milch cow of 1900 averaged about a half gallon of milk per day.

Transportation is necessary for the farmer and the business man and the railway mileage just about doubled from 1900 to 1949. Most of the public highways were maintained locally until the administration of Governor J. Y. Sanders, during which time the first graveled highways were constructed. The automobile was the incentive for building better roads and a system of gravel roads spread over the state during the 1920's and Governor Parker has been referred to as the "gravel roads Governor." Governor Huey P. Long launched the program to hard-surface the main highways. During his administration approximately 4,000 miles

were paved with concrete or asphalt. Beautiful bridges were built across the Red River at Shreveport, Coushatta, Alexandria, and Marksville; the Ouachita was spanned at Monroe and Columbia; the Atchafalaya at Simmesport, Krotz Springs, and Morgan City. Today the mighty "Father of Waters" has bridges at Vicksburg, Vidalia, Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The State has assumed more and more of the responsibility of constructing and maintaining highways so that by 1946 approximately 37,000 miles were under its jurisdiction.

While agriculture predominates the economic activities in the State there is some manufacturing. The amount of capital invested in the factories was \$113,000,000 in 1900 but this information was not included in the succeeding census reports. Other sources tell us that the number of factory establishments decreased from 4,350 in 1900 to 2,697 in 1946 but the number of their employees increased from 46,154 to 134,816; the total wages from \$18,475,000 to \$269,822,000; the cost of raw materials from \$82,299,893 to \$854,661,000; the value of products from \$121,181,683 to \$1,368,574,000.

Louisiana did possess a bountiful supply and great variety of natural resources. The development and exploitation of those resources reads like a page taken from the *Arabian Nights*. Our virgin timber was virtually untouched prior to 1890 due to the scarcity of labor and capital, lack of transportation facilities the limited market, and the technical "know-how." Northern lumbermen entered the State and acquired large tracts of timber and land for as little as twenty-five cents an acre. Modern sawmills were erected and railroads, some known as log-roads, were constructed through the forests to connect the mills with markets. Some of the railroads constructed primarily to serve the lumber industry, were the Kansas City Southern, Missouri Pacific, Louisiana and Arkansas, Louisiana and Northwestern, Rock Island, and numerous smaller roads, many of which have been abandoned.

The State produced 1,000,000,000 board feet of lumber in 1900 and increased this in the next decade to 3,750,000,000 board feet. The lumber industry reached its peak about 1920 and has declined since due to the exhaustion of the virgin timber. In 1945 the production was slightly in excess of 1,000,000,000 board

feet. In 1932 it was estimated that nine-tenths of the State's original forest area of 22,000,000 acres had been cut over at least once. Today there is practically no virgin timber left standing.

In the early days of the industry only the choicest timber was cut and slight or no attention was given to the smaller trees left standing. A few decades ago some effort began to be made to preserve the smaller trees for later cutting. Today broad reforestation programs are being carried out by the larger lumber companies and our colleges are now teaching forestry to assist the program. Early sawmilling was wasteful in other ways. Millions of dollars worth of wood from smaller trees were fed into the furnaces of the boilers as fuel. Other millions of dollars in "slabs" or in mountains of sawdust were thrown away or left to decay. Within recent years a few of the larger mills have constructed box factories adjacent to the sawmill to utilize the by-products. In addition to these forest industries, paper mills have been constructed at Bastrop, West Monroe, Hodge, and Spring Hill which cost many millions of dollars, and in 1946 we produced 989,366 tons of wood pulp which was converted into paper, bags, and cartons.

Lumber towns grew up around the sawmills and when the mill cut out its supply of timber the town became a "ghost-town" in many instances. In other instances the town continued to thrive after the mill ceased operation. Perhaps the largest and best known lumber town is Bogalusa in Washington parish, which is a thriving city of several thousand inhabitants today.

Louisiana has some valuable salt deposits, the most noted being the mines at Avery and Weeks Islands in Iberia parish and near Winnfield in Winn parish. The salt is of such high quality as it comes from the mines that it requires little or no processing. It was estimated that the Avery's Island deposit originally contained 2,858,625,000 tons of rock salt. In 1907 we produced over a million barrels valued at \$225,000, and in 1946 the production was 1,846,522 tons valued at \$4,613,359. The State ranks near the top in salt production.

The Standard Oil Company procured title to the sulphur deposits of Calcasieu parish in 1894 and began mining operations

by the Thrash process. By 1914 Louisiana produced over half the sulphur of the nation and ten years later accounted for practically all the national production with 1,537,345 long tons valued at \$25,000,000. This deposit was exhausted in 1926, and new deposits were discovered in Iberia and Plaquemines parishes. The 1940 production was 512,935 long tons.

The State is blessed with an abundant supply of petroleum and natural gas which have been found in some quantity in practically every parish. Geologists knew that oil lay beneath the surface of south Louisiana for several decades before any serious effort was made to exploit it. The oil was first found in the Calcasieu field at depths varying from 250 to 500 feet. This was in 1902 when the fields at Jennings, and Welsh and Breaux Bridge were discovered. The Caddo field was opened in 1907; the Red River field in 1914; Claiborne in 1920. Today wells are sunk as deep as 14,000 feet. Louisiana produced 548,617 barrels of oil in 1902 and 143,303,000 barrels in 1946.

The natural gas resources are quite extensive. This valuable fuel was first discovered in 1893, in Caddo parish, when John Jones encountered a strong pocket of gas at a depth of eighty feet while digging a water well. The first real gas well was not completed until 1903 and it was three years later before large scale development came. During the early years the market was limited and millions of cubic feet were wasted in the oil fields. It was used for heating, cooking, and lighting purposes mainly because local industry had not developed sufficiently to use much before 1920. After the huge gas deposit of Ouachita, Morehouse and Richland parishes was tapped in 1920, vast quantities of the fuel were burned in the manufacture of carbon black. Soon huge pipe lines were constructed to convey the gas to the cities of Louisiana and to cities in other states hundreds of miles away. Today our gas is piped to the industrial areas of the North and East. Prior to 1920 the gas was not measured when marketed, the users paying a flat fee. The natural gas revenues in 1905 amounted to \$1500 and in 1946 the production of 529,341,000 thousand cubic feet had a market value of \$89,964,000. All the minerals produced in Louisiana in 1906 were valued at \$10,876,719 and in 1946 their value was \$342,944,000.

There are other indexes to our economic development. Our bank deposits on January 1, 1946 totaled \$1,196,661,000. The total number of savings and time deposit accounts was 370,000. On the same date the amount of ordinary life insurance in force was \$1,646,636,000 and industrial policies added \$269,731,000 more.

The economic development has been accompanied by an increase in taxes. In 1921, the state collected \$10,968,100.21 and in 1946 it collected over \$11,000,000. During this fiscal year the taxes to be collected are estimated at \$234,000,000. Thus in twenty-five years the State revenues increased more than ten times, and more than doubled the past two years.

This cursory summary of the social and economic changes of the past fifty years suggests that these forces might have influenced the political life of our State. In fact the speaker is convinced after years of serious study that politics is influenced by the economic and social forces. In a democracy such as ours, the officials endeavor to ascertain the wishes and desires of the majority of voters. Those candidates who gauge those desires most successfully are elected and those officials who do likewise are retained in office.

Getting down to a more specific appraisal of the political changes of the twentieth century it appears that the first twenty-eight years were a continuation of the Bourbon rule that took over with the overthrow of Carpetbag government. The political candidate made his peace with the courthouse group, won over the "important" person in each town or ward, and if he had the support of the press he was elected. This Select Bourbon circle pretty well directed legislation and in some sections controlled the administration of justice. I am not saying that this was wrong nor am I suggesting that the officials were crooked. I am merely describing a pattern of government that was re-instituted with the overthrow of the carpetbaggers. It served its purpose well in the 1880's and 1890's when there were so many illiterate adult whites and at a time when most men were too busy trying to make a living to devote any time to government. This type of government was the most practical, perhaps, when we consider the transportation and communication facilities of that day.

The changes in economic activities with their effect on the social tempo suggested above, created a desire for the political machinery to be overhauled and brought abreast of the times. Most candidates gave lip service to reform and a few governors such as J. Y. Sanders, L. E. Hall and John M. Parker undertook reforms such as would fit into the Bourbon rule pattern. This was not unusual either, in fact it was fairly typical of the nation. William Jennings Bryan and presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson heard national rumblings of discontent and endeavored to pacify or overhaul the old machine. The national upheaval came with the Great Depression of 1929 and swept Franklin D. Roosevelt into power with his New Deal for the forgotten man.

Governor Huey P. Long seems to have had a program for Louisiana analogous to that of the New Deal for the nation. At any rate it might not be too far afield to suggest that Mr. Long knew the common man of Louisiana—his desires, hopes, and aspirations—and became his spokesman and leader. He led the paved road movement at a time when the increasing number of automobiles made hard surface roads necessary. He provided free school books in furtherance of educational opportunities for all. He helped to make the common man conscious of the forces of government and to educate the average man in the way his government functioned. Consequently, the farmer and the laboring man became aware of their power. In the course of time selfish men betrayed the trust placed in them and there was a reaction. The reactionary government promised reform but the common man seems to have been convinced by 1948, that the preceding eight years had been a modified version of the old Bourbon rule. Governor Earl Long lost no time in revealing his progressive intentions to the legislature which responded with legislative measures to implement his program. Taxes had to be increased to provide the additional benefits. The severance tax on petroleum was raised to \$.27 per barrel; and additional \$.02 per gallon placed on gasoline; the sales tax was doubled; and the tax on tobacco increased considerably. At the same time the owners of our

natural resources were benefitted. For example, royalty owners, heretofore paid \$.04 per 1000 cubic feet for natural gas, are now receiving \$.075 per 1000 cubic feet for their gas at the well.

These additional revenues were to be spent for a more abundant life in Louisiana. The total operating revenues for education this year are approximately \$80,000,000 and the minimum salary for public school teachers with the bachelor's degree was set at \$2400. The expenditures for public welfare will be in the neighborhood of \$95,000,000. About \$38,000,000 will be spent to maintain the State's highways; hospitals and mental institutions will receive approximately \$17,000,000. The people of Louisiana are in step with the twentieth century.

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF ST. MARY PARISH, 1845-1860*

By JEWEL LYNN DE GRUMMOND

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Geography

The meanders of the Bayou Teche form the first line of habitation in a parish in which the dwellings have clung close to the network of watercourses.¹ The stream twists its way along a ridge of land elevated some ten feet above its surroundings and sloping gradually downward as it leaves the banks, so that the waters of the area drain, not into the Teche, but away from it into Grand Lake on the east and the sea marsh on the west. As it flows southward, the bayou falls from its highest elevation of fifteen feet above sea level at the northern boundary of the parish to twelve feet at Franklin and finally to ten feet at its lowest eastern point. At one time an abundant forest of magnolias, sweet gums, and live oaks covered the banks of this stream, but as early as 1849, increasing cultivation had left only a single row of oaks. Beyond this forest strip lay prairie extending five or six miles from the bayou to the edges of the sea marsh on the west.

* Master's thesis in History, Louisiana State University, 1948.

¹ Except as otherwise indicated, the geographical description of the area is based upon the following accounts: Daniel Dennett, *Louisiana As it Is: Its Topography and Material Resources; Its Cotton, Sugar Cane, Rice and Tobacco Fields; Its Corn and Grain Lands; Its Numerous Varieties of Field Crops; Its Valuable Grasses; Its Fruits; Its Vegetable and Flower Gardens; Its Vast and Valuable Forests of Timber; Its Prairies, Bottoms, Swamp and Hilly Lands; Health and Longevity; Various Popular Errors Corrected Touching the Soil, Climate, and People of the State. Reliable Information for Farmers, Patrons of Husbandry, Laboring Men, Manufacturers, Capitalists, Men of Enterprise, Invalids; Any Who May Desire to Settle or Purchase Lands in the Gulf States* (New Orleans, 1876), 91-105 and *passim*; James B. Duncan, "Report on the Topography, Climate, and Diseases of the Parish of St. Mary, La.," in E. D. Fenner (ed.), *Southern Medical Reports; Consisting of General and Special Reports on the Medical Topography, Meteorology, and Prevalent Diseases in the Following States: Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, Texas* (New Orleans, 1849), I, 190-196; Samuel H. Lockett, *Louisiana As It Is: A Geographical and Topographical Description of the State, Copiously Illustrated by Original Sketches and Accompanied by a Map Showing in Symbols and Colors the Nature of the Surface, Soil, Forest Growth, and Production of the Entire State. The Results of an Actual and Official Survey of the State* (Baton Rouge, 1873), 44-45, 158-161, 173-177; William H. Perrin (ed.), *Southwest Louisiana, Biographical and Historical* (New Orleans, 1891), 207-222; T. W. Poole, *Some Late Words About Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1891), 93-99, 103-105; B. J. Winchester, "St. Mary's Parish," in William H. Harris (ed.), *Louisiana Products, Resources and Attractions, With a Sketch of the Parishes. A Handbook of Reliable Information Concerning the State* (New Orleans, 1881), 216-219.

Deeper on the eastern bank, the woodland stretched some two or three acres to an open prairie perhaps three times that width and bordered again on the far side by woodland.

The tillable lands of the Teche, extending from one to three miles from its shores, are far more extensive than those along the other and smaller streams of the parish, whose riparian soils suitable for cultivation seldom exceed a depth of one-half mile. Fine bodies of cultivated lands follow the beds of Bayou Sale and Bayou Cypremort for their entire courses, and fertile fringes of tillable soil border Berwick's Bay and Bayous Boeuf and Shaffer. Imposing stands of live oaks, magnolias, ashes, and gums once stood along the banks of Bayou Cypremort, at the headwaters of which stands the large open prairie of the same name. All the rest of St. Mary Parish is open sea marsh, covered from time to time by the tidal overflow, except for Côte Blanche and Belle Isle,² islands in the marsh towering over 160 feet above their surroundings. These two islands which belong to a chain of five such formations sprinkled across the coast, have a soil similar in most respects to the bluff country of North Louisiana.

Though its topographical formation places it in the coastal sea marsh area of Louisiana, St. Mary is usually considered in connection with the prairie parishes contiguous to it. Situated between the Atchafalaya River and Bayou Nezpique and the Mermentau River, St. Landry, Lafayette, Vermilion, St. Martin, Iberia, and St. Mary lie in the area of the old Attakapas country, and are often called the Attakapas Parishes.³ Prior to 1811, a part of this area had been included in the County of Attakapas, but in that year the county was split to form two parishes, St. Mary and St. Martin.⁴ At this division, St. Mary was bounded by Grand Lake on the north, by Berwick's Bay on the east, by a line passing one mile below New Iberia and through Vermilion Bay to the Gulf on the west, and by the four bays of the Gulf edging her coast on the south.⁵ The parish, with an area of about 870 square miles, was approximately twenty miles in

² Prior to 1868, Petite Anse was also included in St. Mary Parish.

³ St. Landry Parish is sometimes omitted from this category.

⁴ Organization of Territory Acts, 1811, p. 104, cited in *County-Parish Boundaries in Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1939), #68, p. 25.

⁵ For an exact delineation of these boundaries, see *ibid.*: *Louisiana Acts*, 1812-13, p. 134, cited in *ibid.*, #75, p. 28; *Louisiana Acts*, 1837, #28, p. 22, cited in *ibid.*, #112, p. 48.

width and had a coastline over forty miles long; throughout the period with which this study deals, her boundaries remained the same.⁶

Origin of the People

St. Mary received an early quota of the Acadian refugees who settled along the Teche after 1765, and such names as Thibodaux, LeBlanc, Bourgeois, Charpentier, Broussard, and Landry remained as evidence of this influx. Many Frenchmen in the area came to Louisiana directly from Europe, leaving their progeny names such as Sigur, Darby, DeClouet, Olivier, and Bienvenu. Early Spanish settlers included the Navarros and Moras, some of the first to start plantations in the area. Besides these Latin peoples, British and American settlers migrated to the Teche in considerable numbers after the Revolutionary War.⁷

If names can be used as an indication of nationality, the native-born Louisianians in St. Mary in 1850 seem about evenly divided between people of French descent and those of other origin, with the latter having a slightly superior number.⁸ The Garrets, Berwicks, Gordys, Yanceys, Footes, and Kempers appear almost balanced by the Verrets, Carlins, Sigurs, Heberts, Freres, and Patouts. The more common French names, such as Boudreaux, Theriot, Landry, Thibodeaux, and Robicheaux, though they appear, do not occur so frequently as tradition might lead one to expect.

The white population of St. Mary in 1850 was distributed thus:

Where Born	Number	Percentage of Total White Population
Louisiana-born Population.....	2904	77.5
Foreign-born Population.....	389	10.4
Born in States Other Than Louisiana	452	12.1
TOTAL	3745	100.0

⁶ The creation of the Parish of Iberia in 1868 cut into St. Mary's territory. For the boundaries of that new parish, see *Louisiana Acts*, #208, p. 272, cited in *ibid.*, #183, p. 79.

⁷ Alcée Fortier (ed.), *Louisiana; Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form* (Atlanta, 1909), I, 421; Alcée Fortier, *Louisiana Studies: Literature, Customs and Dialects; History and Education* (New Orleans, 1894), 173.

⁸ This and the following information about population is based on study of the microfilm copy of the Unpublished Census of 1850, Schedule I, Free White Inhabitants, of St. Mary Parish, available in Hill Memorial Library of Louisiana State University. The original manuscript is at Duke University.

Emigrants from Virginia, Kentucky, New York, North Carolina, and Tennessee made up over sixty-seven percent of the inhabitants born in states other than Louisiana;⁹ no other state was represented by more than thirty-three of its natives in St. Mary. The foreign-born population was not far below the number of Americans born out of the state and was derived as follows:

Nation	Total Number in Parish	Percentage of Total Foreign-Born in Parish	Percentage of Total White Population in Parish
England	7	1.80	0.19
Ireland	56	14.40	1.50
Scotland	11	2.83	0.29
Germany	80	20.56	2.13
France	164	42.16	4.38
Spain	1	.26	0.03
Belgium	1	.26	0.03
Italy	2	.51	0.05
British America	6	1.54	0.16
Persia	2	.51	0.05
Switzerland	6	1.54	0.16
West Indies	2	.51	0.05
Unknown	51	13.12	1.36
Total	389	100.00	10.38

It is noticeable that the great majority of aliens came to St. Mary from Northern Europe, with France, Germany and the British Isles, in that order, supplying the largest numbers. Thus the unromantic figures of the federal census refute the popular theory that the great majority of the inhabitants of St. Mary were of Acadian lineage.

Earlier History

In 1848, the *Planters' Banner* of Franklin paused to reminisce over the steady climb and tremendous progress of the parish in the years since Louisiana's entrance into the Union¹⁰ The faint hint of braggadocio in the article is probably understandable when one realizes that a traveler passing through the area in 1806 had remarked upon the primitive, almost entirely pastoral existence of a large number of the inhabitants.¹¹

⁹ Virginia supplied 16.37%; Kentucky, 15.04%; New York, 13.05%; North Carolina, 12.06%; and Tennessee, 10.84% of the American population born outside of the state.

¹⁰ Franklin, La., *Planters' Banner*, April 20, 1848.

¹¹ Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America, Performed in the Year 1806, for the Purpose of Exploring the Rivers Alleghany, Monongahela, Ohio, and Mississippi, and Ascertaining the Produce and Condition of Their Banks and Vicinity* (London, 1809), 296. Hereafter cited: Ashe, *Travels in America*.

In this early period cotton and indigo were still the important crops of the area;¹² the change to cane culture did not come until the 1820's, though as early as 1816¹³ eight planters were producing sugar in the Attakapas region. Indeed, in 1806 Ashe had noted that, though stock raising was an important occupation, sugar was "very abundant and profitable."¹⁴ Slaves were deemed a necessary adjunct to the culture of the staples of the area and a local custom indicated the recognition of their value:

The local manner of calculating wealth is very singular; it is said, such a man is worth ten negroes a year, and another one hundred; and it is understood to a dollar how much the income amounts to. One negro can cultivate two acres of cotton, the produce of which is two hundred dollars; the deduction from which ratio is, that he who has ten negroes is worth two thousand dollars per annum; . . .¹⁵

In 1824, there were 1515 acres planted in cane in St. Mary, and from these, 644 hands produced 1586 hogsheads of sugar.¹⁶ The following year 504 additional acres were brought under cane cultivation and the resulting increase raised the total number of hogsheads for the year to 2,254.¹⁷ The low cotton prices of 1826 caused many planters to turn to the cultivation of sugar cane. A few years later, however, first a drop in sugar prices and then a number of lean crops seemed to threaten the existence of many of these newly established plantations;¹⁸ planters who made 300 hogsheads of sugar in 1832 considered themselves lucky.¹⁹

At this period indigo vats were still a common sight along the Teche and only a few sugarhouses dotted the public road from Franklin to New Iberia. By 1835, however, almost all the plantations along the bayou had turned to sugar production.²⁰

¹² F. D. Richardson, "The Teche Country Fifty Years Ago," in *Southern Bivouac*, IV (1886), 593.

¹³ *Niles' Weekly Register*, XIII, 38-39, as cited in Walter Prichard, Fred B. Kniffen, and Clair A. Brown (eds.), "Southern Louisiana and Southern Alabama in 1819: The Journal of James Leander Cathcart," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXVIII (1945), 795. Hereafter cited: Prichard and others, "Cathcart's Survey".

¹⁴ Ashe, *Travels in America*, 300.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 300-301.

¹⁶ *Attakapas Gazette*, Feb. 12, 1825, as cited in *Planters' Banner*, April 27, 1848.

¹⁷ *Planters' Banner*, April 27, 1848.

¹⁸ New Orleans *Louisiana Courier*, Nov. 3, 1826, as cited in Joseph G. Tregle, Jr., "Louisiana and the Tariff, 1816-1846," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXV (1942), 54.

¹⁹ James Brown to Henry Clay, Philadelphia, Jan. 24, 1832, quoted in James A. Padgett (ed.), "Letters of James Brown to Henry Clay," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXIV (1941), 1163.

²⁰ Richardson, "Teche Country Fifty Years Ago," *loc. cit.*, IV, 593.

In 1819 the *James Lawrence* plied its way up and down the Teche and through the Balize to New Orleans, probably the only schooner making regular trips along this route. She could go up the Teche only as far as New Iberia, for the snags and fallen trees obstructing the bayou prohibited navigation beyond that point.²¹ Interest in transportation apparently kept pace with increased agricultural production, however, for in 1825 forty persons subscribed the sum of \$1200 to clear the Teche for steamboat navigation between St. Martinville and New Iberia, and in the spring of the following year Captain Curry guided the steamer *Louisville* into the port of St. Martinville for the first time. Two years later A. Fuselier of St. Mary was engaged by the directors of the St. Martinville Steamboat Company to clear away obstructions to steamer navigation in Bayou Sorrel and Lake Chicot.²²

Direct trade communications with the North seem to have been first opened in 1825 by Washington Jackson of St. Mary who sent his brig *Attakapas* with a cargo of 400 hogsheads of sugar to Philadelphia and the following year brought back a variety of dry goods and hardware for Franklin merchants.²³ Improvements were also made in transportation between New Orleans and the Attakapas country, and by 1838 conveyance apparently not only served utilitarian purposes but offered comfort as well, for a correspondent of the New Orleans *Picayune* wrote that he had "arrived safe at Franklin after four days in the superb steamer Yazoo, Captain Latham, who, by his strict attention and gentlemanly conduct, rendered our passage both safe and agreeable."²⁴

Increased agricultural production and better transportation facilities fostered other changes. Villages sprang up at strategic points. Pattersonville²⁵ in 1819 apparently boasted only a tavern as a place of business,²⁶ but by 1838, several stores, a post office, and a public school were located there.²⁷ That same year the little village of Centerville—not considered worthy of mention in several earlier accounts of the area—contained a post office and some stores, and was the chief port for all goods coming into the Bayou Sale region.²⁸

²¹ Prichard and others, "Cathcart's Survey," *loc. cit.*, XXVIII, 810.

²² *Planters' Banner*, April 27, 1848.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Walter Prichard (ed.), "Some Interesting Glimpses of Louisiana A Century Ago (From the Old Files of the *Picayune*)," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXIV (1941), 40.

²⁵ Now called Patterson.

²⁶ Prichard and others, "Cathcart's Survey," *loc. cit.*, XXVIII, 771.

²⁷ Prichard, "Some Interesting Glimpses of Louisiana A Century Ago," *loc. cit.*, XXIV, 40.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

But the leading port of the area was Franklin. Laid out in 1800 by Guinea Lewis and named by him in honor of the creator of *Poor Richard*,²⁹ it was nineteen years later a village of some twenty houses and 120 to 150 inhabitants, a village which formed the hub of a wheel of productive plantations fanning out to a circle of approximately ten miles. Isaac Reed was one of the more enterprising citizens at this time, running a ferry operated by horses on Lake Verret and nearby bayous, and probably owning Reed's Tavern in the village.³⁰ By 1838, the population had jumped to 800, and the boat-lined wharves of the port gave promise of even greater prosperity in the future. Already Franklin's citizens might enjoy the advantages offered by the two banks, two printing offices, two hotels, public school, female seminary, post office, courthouse, church, "extensive ice house," and macadamized streets of the town. Conveniently near two bodies of water, Lake Chitemaches and Côte Blanche Bay, Franklin not only profited from the recreational facilities as an excellent location for summer homes, but she also was kept well supplied with oysters and several varieties of fish.³¹ With her thriving port, numerous business houses, and "cultural advantages," the little town by 1838 had already begun to assume a certain metropolitan air.³²

CHAPTER II

THE PATTERN OF SOCIETY

Economic Basis: Landholdings

A glance at LaTourette's Map of St. Mary Parish in 1853 gives perhaps a clearer picture of the landholdings of the period than can be provided by the census records, with their emphasis on occupation rather than ownership.¹ As a rule the holdings straddled the bayous with approximately equal acreage on either side of the stream. In cases where the serpentine course of the waterway made this impossible, irregularly shaped patches appeared, often with narrow apexes jutting against neighboring lands equally odd in pattern on one bank and flaring out to great width on the other.

²⁹ Sidney J. Romero, Jr., "The Political Career of Murphy James Foster, Governor of Louisiana, 1892-1900," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXVIII (1945), 1130.

³⁰ Prichard and others, "Cathcart's Survey," *loc. cit.*, XXVIII, 763.

³¹ Prichard, "Some Interesting Glimpses of Louisiana A Century Ago," *loc. cit.*, XXIV, 40.

³² *Ibid.*, 41.

¹ Information in this and the following paragraph is based upon a study of the Parish of St. Mary as shown in LaTourette's Map of Louisiana of 1853, unless otherwise indicated.

Despite the apparent preference for riparian sites, several large and prosperous plantations dotted the sea marsh. One of the larger holdings in the parish was that of William Weeks² atop Grand Côte, an elevated oasis of rich prairie soil in the coastal lowlands. The partnership of Hays and Rose shared Petite Anse Isle with John C. Marsh, while the third such formation in the Parish, Côte Blanche, was owned by the firm of Hugger and Ogden. Aside from these outlying plantations, the overwhelming majority of the estates lay along the Bayous Teche and Sale and the Atchafalaya River. The largest landowner and one of the wealthiest men in St. Mary in 1850,³ Martial Sorrel, had several separate holdings totaling 14,200 acres, located within a few miles of each other near the point where Bayou Cypremort takes its waters from the Teche. Smaller plantations and farms lay alongside these large estates, and apparently the two were mixed together indiscriminately throughout the parish.

In 1850, approximately forty percent of the holdings in St. Mary were being worked in plots under 500 acres in size, while the large estates exceeding 3,500 acres accounted for only four percent of the total.⁴ These figures may not be assumed to be positive proof that ownership followed a similar pattern, but since only nineteen more names are listed in the 1850 Census⁵ than are shown by LaTourette on his map three years later, the discrepancy was perhaps not great. By 1860 the number of plots totaling less than 500 acres had risen from the eighty-eight of the previous census to 134, exactly one-half of the holdings listed that year. Estates over 3,500 acres had also increased in number, but not to a great extent, the four percent of 1850 rising only to four and one-half percent.

Though the proportion of large plantations showed no great increase between 1850 and 1860, planters apparently began the cultivation of heretofore unimproved property and added to their facilities and equipment, for the cash value of the majority of estates rose. Only seven of the 206 farmers listed in Schedule IV of the 1850 Census were farming plots valued at less than \$1,000, while thirty-one had plantations worth over forty times that

² Unpublished Census Returns of 1850, Schedule IV, Agriculture, referred to hereafter as MS. Census, 1850, IV. A microfilm copy of this material is available in Hill Memorial Library of Louisiana State University; the original manuscript is at Duke University.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Except when otherwise stated, the information given in the remainder of this chapter is based upon a study of the MS. Census, 1850, IV, and the MS. Census, 1860, IV; the year referred to is indicated in the text.

⁵ This refers to Schedule IV only.

amount. Ten years later, the Eighth Census showed 271 agriculturists in St. Mary Parish; at that time, twenty-two holdings were given values under \$1,000, but the number of plantations worth over \$40,000 had jumped to ninety. Thus, while the percentage of those low-valued lands rose only about five percent during this ten-year period, the holdings in the second classification mentioned had more than doubled their percentage to include over one-third of the listed total.

The 'fifties were prosperous years for the inhabitants of St. Mary. Apparently all classes enjoyed the accruing advantages, for in a comparison of approximately half of the names listed in the Fourth Schedule of 1850 with the similar records of 1860, only one instance was found of a holding which had not been increased in size. In that case the amount of land held had actually decreased, but the value of the total property, including farm machinery, had risen \$32,000.⁶

Mary Porter was the owner of the plantation assigned the highest cash valuation in 1860. In 1850 her holdings had comprised 1,000 acres of improved land and 4,364 acres of unimproved ground, with a cash value of \$120,000, and \$20,000 worth of farm machinery. Ten years later, her 1,800 improved and 4,600 unimproved acres were valued at \$400,000—some \$100,000 above any other holding in the parish; and she had increased the value of her farm machinery to \$50,000. Another wealthy planter who added to his holdings in the period between 1850 and 1860 was Charles Grevemberg, whose acquisition of an additional 2,507 acres raised the value of his estate from \$100,000 to \$200,000.

Proportionately large increases in the value of property holdings were not unusual among smaller planters. John B. Murphy had only 425 acres of land in 1850; his farm was worth \$12,000 and his machinery \$1,500. Ten years later he had acquired 3,000 acres of land and \$12,000 worth of machinery, with the estate itself assigned a value of \$100,000. Dr. John Tarleton's 550 acres were worth \$20,000 in 1850; in 1860 he possessed 1,980 acres valued at \$150,000. A 400% increase in the size of a man's holding was not at all rare, and planters with less than fifty acres in 1850 were often the owners of farms of 300 to 400

⁶ The planter referred to is David Weeks, who in 1850 held 290 improved acres and 1,110 unimproved; his farm machinery was valued at \$8000 and the cash value of his farm was \$20,000. In 1860 he held 180 improved acres and 900 unimproved; his farm was worth \$50,000 and his machinery \$10,000.

acres ten years later, with corresponding increases in the monetary value of their lands and machinery. The fifty acres Dazincourt Lange held in 1850 were worth \$850; in 1860 his property included 300 acres and was valued at \$8,700. It seems highly improbable that social cleavage could have been rigidly maintained under such fluid conditions, when transition from one economic class to another was so easily achieved.⁷

Slaveholdings; Whites; Free Colored

After 1830 a tendency of rich plantation areas to attract more planters and more slaves, thus causing the slave population to maintain a faster rate of growth than the free, was manifest throughout the rural portion of Louisiana's black belt;⁸ St. Mary, as a part of that area, was no exception. Between the Seventh and Eighth Censuses, population of the parish had increased about 3,000, and fell into the following groups:

	1850 ⁹		1860 ¹⁰	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Whites	3,423	24.99	3,508	20.86
Free Colored	424	3.10	251	1.49
Slaves	9,850	71.91	13,057	77.65
Total	13,697	100.00	16,816	100.00

Though the slave population had increased 3,200, the parish had gained less than 100 white inhabitants.

A considerable number of these slaves were held singly or in very small groups, for of the 250 slaveowners in the area in 1850, fifty-three percent owned less than ten slaves each and only ten percent held more than fifty.¹¹ Five people owned over 100

⁷ Corroborative statements may be found in Roger W. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers During Slavery and After, 1840-1875* (Baton Rouge, 1939), 32.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Compiled from statistics given in *Statistical View of the United States, Embracing Its Territory, Population—White, Free Colored, and Slave—Moral and Social Condition, Industry, Property, and Revenue; The Detailed Statistics of Cities, Towns, and Counties; Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census, to Which Are Added the Results of Every Previous Census, Beginning With 1790, in Comparative Tables, With Explanatory and Illustrative Notes, Based Upon the Schedules and Other Official Sources of Information* (Washington, 1854), 248. Hereafter cited: *Compendium of the Seventh Census*.

¹⁰ Gleaned from statistics given in *Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, 1864), 194. Hereafter cited: *Population of the United States in 1860*.

¹¹ Unless otherwise stated, this and the information following are based upon a study of the Unpublished Census Returns, Schedule II, Slave Inhabitants, of 1850 and 1860; the year is indicated in the text. Hereafter cited: MS. Census, 1850/1860, II.

Negroes each, with Martial Sorrel's 297 being by far the largest holding in the parish. Ten years later the slaveholders numbered 396; the group owning less than ten slaves each had fallen to forty-two and seven-tenths percent and the percentage owning over fifty was twenty-one. Seven planters owned over 200 Negroes each, and one of that number, John Bateman, owned 250. Paul Corwin, listed as "Sorrel's agent," held 364 slaves, thus giving Sorrel the largest holding in the area by a margin of 114.

The following chart indicates the growth of slaveholdings during the period:¹²

	1850		1860		Percentage of Increase
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Total White Population	3,423	100.00	3,508	100.00	—
Slaveholdings of 1-50	202	5.90	309	8.81	2.91
Slaveholdings of 50-99	21	0.61	54	1.54	0.93
Slaveholdings of 100-199	4	0.12	28	0.80	0.68
Slaveholdings over 200	0	0.00	5	.14	.14
Total Number of Slaveholders	227	6.63	792	11.29	4.66

Not only were there more slaves and more slaveholders in 1860, but most planters had increased their individual holdings. William Weeks, owner of 147 blacks in 1850, possessed 214 ten years later. Charles Grevemberg had increased the number of his Negroes from 183 to 210, and John Moore's seventy-five slaves had had forty-three added to their number. In prosperous circumstances typical of their area during the period, these men had added slaves, acres, and machinery to their establishments and had seen the size and value of their estates mount and even double.

Though the large majority of slaves were the property of agriculturists, some Negroes belonged to members of society following other trades. Many of the white inhabitants were artisans and laborers. Coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and brickmasons

¹² Unpublished Census Returns. Schedule I, Free White Inhabitants, 1850 and 1860. Hereafter cited: MS. Census, 1850/1860, I.

were especially numerous but the census also reveals a general sprinkling of merchants and coffeehouse and grogshop managers. Overseeing provided a means of livelihood for quite a large proportion of the men, and the engineering profession was also well represented.¹³

Probably many of these same trades provided employment for the free colored population of St. Mary. There is no reason to believe that their circumstances of life were greatly dissimilar from that of free Negroes in other sections of Louisiana. Perhaps the majority of them were artisans, following the trades of cooper, carpenter, mechanic, drayman, day laborer, etc., and occasionally reaching positions of financial comfort and security.¹⁴

In 1857, Mary Heloise Verdin, a free person of color, bought an eleven-year-old Negro girl, Margaret, from Mrs. Rachel Topham for "\$455 cash in hand."¹⁵ Whether this purchase was made for the purpose of emancipation or continued servitude is not ascertainable, but such cases, though unusual, were occasionally found in St. Mary during this period. Sometimes such purchases carried the specific condition that the slaves were to be liberated as soon as legally possible.¹⁶

The end of the prosperous decade before 1860 found St. Mary's population as a whole and in the majority of individual cases, the possessors of more slaves, more land, and more wealth than had been theirs in previous years.

CHAPTER III

RURAL LIFE

Plantation Premises

Often homes are an indication of a people's ideas; as such they provide a keynote to the cultural progress of an area.¹ In early years buildings in the Teche country frequently were constructed of a sort of adobe pulled out in layers from the deeply spaded mortar beds into which green moss had been trodden.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Annie Lee West Stahl, "The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Louisiana," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXV (1942), 371.

¹⁵ Original Conveyances, St. Mary Parish (Franklin, Louisiana), M, August, 1857.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, N, Dec. 29, 1859.

¹ James C. Bonner, "Plantation Architecture of the Lower South on the Eve of the Civil War," in *Journal of Southern History*, XI (1945), 370.

Horizontal sticks placed at frequent intervals between the studdings held the mortar in place, and when dried and white-washed this homemade plaster was pronounced both solid and attractive. A flooring of clay covered with ashes and a thatched roof or gables completed the building.² Though such early homes were crude, those of the Creoles, at least, were exceedingly clean and neat; visitors to the area, even when hostile to other Creole characteristics, nearly always admitted that they were excellent housekeepers.³

The enhanced prosperity that came with extensive cane cultivation in St. Mary brought the old adobe structures into disrepute, and by the early 1840's the plantation buildings had improved so as to become in many instances a real contribution to the beauty of the Teche scene. A contemporary description noted the striking contrast of the snow-white Negro quarters with the bright red of the brick sugarhouse, its tall black stacks standing like watchtowers over the plantation. The effect was often impressive.⁴

Houses of farmer and planter alike generally stood near the waterways, usually not over a hundred yards from the bayou.⁵ Often a tight cluster of Creole dwellings gave testimony of the close family ties of that people, as it was a common practice for a Creole farmer to build a house adjoining his own for each of his children as they married until his whole bayou front was occupied, resulting in the formation of miniature villages when the family had been especially prolific.⁶

Surrounded by gardens whose shrubbery reached to the stream's edge, the larger plantation homes usually overlooked hedges of lemon, osage orange, rose, and hawthorn forming boundaries between the various divisions of the estate.⁷ Occasionally one found the cultivated land in one field surrounded by a cypress post-and-rail fence, often with two drainage ditches following parallel routes about twenty-five feet apart across

² Richardson, "Teche Country Fifty Years Ago," *loc. cit.*, IV, 593.

³ Marguerite Pecot, "The Cajun," (M. A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1932), 39.

⁴ Richardson, "Teche Country Fifty Years Ago," *loc. cit.*, IV, 593.

⁵ Charles Daubeny, *Journal of a Tour Through the United States and in Canada, Made During the Years, 1837-38*, as quoted in Wendell H. Stephenson, *Alexander Porter, Whig Planter of Old Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1934), 120.

⁶ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, With Remarks on Their Economy* (New York, 1856), 649.

⁷ T. B. Thorpe, "Sugar and the Sugar Regions of Louisiana," in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, VII (1853), 750-751.

the entire tract; the dirt from the ditches might be thrown up between them to form a high, well-drained road through the center of the plantation.⁸

Oaklawn, the plantation near Franklin owned first by Alexander Porter and then by his brother James,⁹ was described as having its large and pretentious mansion located upon the highest ground, with the gradual slope of the lawn in front of it ornamented by statuary and shrubbery. Near the house stood a cistern enclosed with brick and cement and further shielded from the heat by a rose-covered latticework encasement; only winter water flowed into this receptacle, as its connection with the eaves was shut off in the summertime in an effort to keep the water at the lowest temperature possible. The dense foliage of the fine stand of trees for which the manor was named barred the sun's rays from the brick dairy house, keeping cool the vessels of butter, cream, and milk within. Nearby was a large flower and vegetable garden.¹⁰ A dovecote, considered a universal appendage to the house of a sugar planter,¹¹ was not mentioned in the description of Oaklawn, but the commentator may have deemed such an item too commonplace to notice.

On another sugar plantation of which we have a detailed description, the house, facing the waterway, stood only about seven rods from the public road; between this thoroughfare and the mansion was a yard formally planted with rows of evergreens and flourishing orange trees. Near the house stood a two-story dovecote and close behind it lay a second yard containing quarters for the family servants, the smokehouse, kitchen, stable, and carriage house; to the rear of this enclosure was a garden plot cultivated by a Negro gardener who, for his own pleasure, had planted a few violets and other flowers in addition to performing his assigned task of growing vegetables for consumption by the planter's family. From a corner of this back court a road led to the sugarhouse and the Negro quarters, which were about 600 yards from the main residence.¹²

⁸ Olmsted, *Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 658-659.

⁹ Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 125.

¹⁰ R. L. Allen, "Letters from the South—No. 9," in *American Agriculturist*, VI (1847), 214.

¹¹ Olmsted, *Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 659.

¹² *Ibid.*

Large and pretentious homes were unusual in St. Mary; an English visitor to the region noticed that the loveliest lands along the Teche had not been utilized as a setting for plantation mansions, but rather that proprietors of quite extensive estates were "often housed in cottages which an English bailiff would despise."¹³

The majority of these smaller dwellings are believed to have been of one and a half stories, with the main floor elevated the height of a full story, enclosing beneath it a basement or leaving the space open except for the supporting brick pillars.¹⁴ The roofs were often gabled at the sides and included under their eaves a front or back porch, or perhaps both. Most often the floor plan featured a central hall around which were clustered the main living rooms of the house. These modest homes were almost universally of wood, with pine and cypress, used separately or in conjunction, being the favored building materials.

The larger homes were more often two stories in height, and though the ubiquitous colonnade often afforded an exterior of some pretension, the internal arrangement remained simple. The invariably symmetrical plan had a wide hall extending the length of the building and opening at the front and back with wide double doors; often another hall crossed this main corridor and offered a side entrance and service stairway.¹⁵ In some houses, wine cellars beneath the structure elevated the room immediately over them a little above the rest of the house, giving a variation of two or three steps in floor level. Rarely were the capitals of the colonnades worked with great attention to the architectural orders; usually they exhibited only the imagination and taste of the local carpentry.

A plantation home typical in many respects was described by a traveler who visited the two-story building. Its first floor was of brick and its second of wood, while the broad gallery, shaded by an extension of the high, steep roof characteristic of an old Creole house, completely encircled the structure. The white family's quarters were on the second story—library, parlors,

¹³ Daubeny, as quoted in Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 120.

¹⁴ The material in this and the following paragraph is based upon information found in Theodore Laist, "The Architecture of the Bayou Teche Country," in *Western Architect*, XXXVII (1928), 37-44, 47-54 (A typed copy of which article is available in Hill Memorial Library of Louisiana State University), and Cecile Willink, "Architectural Daguerreotypes of Louisiana," in *Country Life*, XXXIV (1932), 69.

¹⁵ This material is supported by the author's acquaintance with several ante-bellum houses in the parish which fit the description almost exactly. An outstanding example is the Bauman House in Centerville, now owned by Corbett Pelier.

and bedrooms all on that one floor.¹⁶ In these larger establishments the kitchen was located in one of the out-buildings, that the ever present fire hazard might be lessened and the planter's family might escape the cooking odors and the noisy chatter of the slaves. Here an open fireplace usually filled one entire wall, with a brick hearth jutting out six feet or more before it. The large iron ovens were hollowed out on top to hold the live coals which baked the breads and pastries within, and hooks and cranes of various sizes extended from the sides of the fireplace to support the larger pots and kettles; smaller vessels usually rested on trivets.¹⁷ Occasionally these kitchens were as large as thirty by eighteen feet, offering accommodations to large numbers of cooks.¹⁸

Furnishings in these homes were comparatively simple. The less pretentious dwellings usually had several tables of various sizes, about a half-dozen chairs, a few mattresses and bedsteads, and an occasional armoire.¹⁹ The furniture was often home-fabricated and rough, but was kept highly polished, in harmony with the waxed floors, which were said to gleam as brightly as a fine dining table.²⁰

Margaret Smith, whose estate totaled about \$830 had, in the way of furniture, one cherry dining table, a cherry armoire, a safe, eight chairs, one cypress table and miscellaneous kitchen furniture; it is interesting to note that no bedstead is mentioned in this inventory.²¹ A more extensive list was found detailing the possessions of Eliza Nimos Nixon. Though the total value of her estate was less than \$200, she owned two beds and their bedding, five pairs of sheets, two quilts, a blanket, a cradle, nine chairs, a bureau, a secretary, a washstand, a safe, a clock, a table, and the unusual item of fifty dollars' worth of books.²²

The more prosperous homes evidently contained the common articles already noted, usually in larger quantities, but not necessarily of higher value. Theodotia Campbell at her death left a settee, a set of tables, two armchairs, two small tables, one dozen wooden chairs, one dozen flax-bottom chairs, two rocking chairs,

¹⁶ Olmsted, *Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 659.

¹⁷ Beryl D. Hatfield, "Fish Cookery in South Louisiana, With Its Influence and Contributions," (M. A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1933), 14.

¹⁸ Original Mortgages, St. Mary Parish, XVI, Jan. 25, 1853. All courthouse records quoted herein are at this same location.

¹⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, the material in this and the two following paragraphs is based upon a study of the Original Estates Records for the period.

²⁰ Amos Stoddard, *Sketches, Historical and Descriptive, of Louisiana* (Philadelphia, 1812), 328.

²¹ Original Estates, XXXI, May 8, 1848.

²² Original Conveyances, H, Dec. 23, 1850.

a sideboard, a bureau, eight bedsteads and bedding, three looking glasses, a brass clock, and an article appearing rarely on succession lists (despite the popularity of music lessons), a piano-forte.²³ The heirs to John Rice's estate received, in addition to the usual furnishings, a large and a small map of the United States, a bookcase—a piece of furniture apparently seldom needed in St. Mary—twenty-five volumes of Sparks' American biographies, twelve volumes of the writings of Washington, ten volumes of the works of Franklin, and "a lot of old books."²⁴

Cherry was apparently the favorite wood for furnishings, though other materials were also used. Louisa Bowles had, besides a cherry table, one mahogany armoire, table and bureau, a black walnut armoire, and two maple bedsteads.²⁵ Featherbeds were used, but were not the only type of sleeping paraphernalia, for moss mattresses appear on several inventories of the possessions of small farmers. Looking glasses were not uncommon, even in the poorer homes. Spittoons occasionally appear in inventories and probably were almost an essential article of furniture in a time when the chewing of tobacco made frequent expectoration a necessity.

The large number of chairs found in many homes—it is not unusual to find the possession of two or three dozen noted, and one man had fifty-six²⁶—perhaps indicated that the owners often entertained groups of visiting friends, a favorite pastime in the region.²⁷ Sometimes neighbors met regularly at the home of one or another of the group for conversation or cardplaying. One such gathering in the vicinity of the Richardson plantation at Chicot Noir on Bayou Teche met each Sunday for a discussion of crop conditions, a game of cards or dominoes, and the mutual enjoyment of a convivial occasion. Dinner, "the great business of the day," was served at about two o'clock, with a reinforced complement of servants, clad in white aprons, attending the wants of the feasters. A member of the party remembered that "The feast began in earnest with . . . Gumbo, of African descent . . . the many courses . . . were 'distinct as the billows, yet one with the sea,' and each billow was enough to drown a common appetite. . . . I do know that one of those old, long practiced creole darky cooks,

²³ Original Estates, XXX, August 6, 1845.

²⁴ Original Mortgages, XIV-2, Jan. 13, 1851.

²⁵ Original Estates, XXIX, Jan. 2, 1845.

²⁶ Original Conveyances, H, Sept. 8, 1851.

²⁷ Richardson, "Teche Country Fifty Years Ago," *loc. cit.*, IV, 596.

under the inspiration of Madame, could beat the old serpent himself with tempting viands."²⁸ After dinner the group, occasionally feeling the effects of the claret and champagne they had enjoyed, settled down to an afternoon of song and conversation until sunset, when the party chose a place for the following week's gathering and left for home.²⁹

Plantation Discipline

Visitors to the Teche region in the late 1840's and the 1850's seemed favorably impressed by the treatment of slaves of the planters with whom they came in contact. One traveler noted that the Negroes on the plantation he visited were efficiently disciplined and regarded their master "with affection, respect, and pride."³⁰ Often the owners took a paternal interest in their blacks; Judge Porter, for example, was described by a contemporary as "beloved by his own dependants, with whom, on reaching his estate, he shook hands, like a Feudal Lord amongst his serfs, receiving their congratulations on his return, and inquiring with interest into their family concerns."³¹ One of his slaves in later years remembered the Judge as openhanded and generous, but firm—"Things had to be jes' so, but dar warn't no naggin' nor scoldin, it was jes' stiddy management."³² Another indication of kindly affection and consideration for the welfare of the slaves are occasional instances in parish donation books of Negroes being given away for the stated purpose of seeing that they had good homes.³³

It was, of course, to the planter's best interest to see that his slaves were well taken care of, and in plantation contracts one finds occasional mention of the expected treatment of the slaves involved. In a partnership agreement concluded between William F. Weeks, Alfred C. Weeks, and their mother, Mrs. Mary C. Moore, it was stated that the working hands, their children, and the old and infirm, should be "clothed, fed, and receive all necessary medical attendance, at the Expense of the partnership and shall be humanely treated."³⁴

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Olmsted, *Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 656.

³¹ Daubeny, as quoted in Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 126.

³² Charles Stewart, "My Life As A Slave," in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, LXIX (1884), 738.

³³ One such example is that of Mrs. Carlin's gift of a slave on Jan. 5, 1857, listed in Donation Book B (1855).

³⁴ David Weeks and Family Papers, Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

Written agreements regarding plantation management and use of slaves were regarded as a necessity even among persons bound by the closest family ties, if one is to judge from the multitude of contracts between husband and wife, brother and brother, parent and child, to be found in the court records of the parish. Plantation contracts were usually concluded in some detail. An agreement between Elizabeth Dancy and Thomas E. Polk stated that he should give his medical services "to both the white and black members of the family"³⁵ and also act as financier for one year from the contracting date. Polk agreed to place twenty slaves on the place, paying the overseer's wages, the cost of the plantation tools, food, clothing, and other expenses incidental to their service; Dancy was to pay the cost of repairing the sugarhouse, Negro quarters, and white residence. Each of the contracting parties was to receive a share of the crop proportional to his investment.

In most contracts dealing with slave labor, notations concerning abilities and handicaps were included in the listing of the hands, their age, and value. For example, John C. Marsh's bill of sale of his sugar plantation on Petite Anse Island listed the Negroes on the place and noted that John Houston was a bricklayer and worth \$1200; Charles was a cooper with a similar value; Gus was a blacksmith, Old Dick a carpenter, and Jane a seamstress. On the same list was Francis, who though only twenty years old, was subject to rheumatism, a condition probably accounting for his low evaluation of \$200.³⁶ The slave roster of Marguerite Rentrop included Negroes of varied talents: one was a carpenter and sugar boiler; another a carpenter, sugar boiler, and cooper; while still another was both a cooper and a brick molder. Other slaves were listed as engineers, cooks and washers, sawyers, shoemakers, rough blacksmiths, and coach drivers; several had "runaway" written beside their names, and there were two indications of lameness, one of the loss of one hand, and one of the loss of an eye.

Public auctions of slaves were frequent events in St Mary³⁷ and advertisements of individual sales also appeared often in the local newspaper.³⁸ Groups of slaves were most often sold at

³⁵ Original Conveyances, I, Nov. 1, 1852.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, G-2, Sept. 10, 1849.

³⁷ Based on a study of the files of the *Planters' Banner* for the period, available in Hill Memorial Library of Louisiana State University.

³⁸ *Planters' Banner*, July 22, 1849.

the courthouse and the presence of house servants in their number was customarily indicated in the announcements of the sale.³⁹ Slaves prices in St. Mary probably followed the general trend of such prices elsewhere in the state; prices in 1853 were considered exceptionally high and at one judicial sale in the parish a Negro "in no way remarkable" was sold for \$2300.⁴⁰ In addition to insuring the buyer a clear title to his purchase, bills of sale often gave a terse description of the servants conveyed. One of the slaves Darius Lognon bought from the Widow Provost in 1851 was subjects to fits,⁴¹ and another bill of sale pronounced "a certain Negro man named Baptiste, aged about twenty-three years," sound in body and mind, and fully guaranteed hereby against the maladies, but *not the vices*, prescribed by law."⁴² Certificates manumitting Negroes likewise often contained descriptions of certain of the freedman's characteristics, as did one given by Judge Joshua Baker granting his slave Erasmus his freedom and stating that "Erasmus is a little inclined to be yellow and is about forty-five years old. . . ."⁴³

Occasionally skilled Negroes were hired out by their masters.⁴⁴ One slaveholder offered eight field hands, one of whom had a knowledge of bricklaying, and three half-grown hands for hire and expressed his desire to be engaged with his slaves as their overseer.⁴⁵ Such an arrangement was likely to prevent the mistreatment and undernourishment often associated with the hiring out of Negroes, a consideration which, along with the comparatively low wages usually offered, rendered the practice not so profitable as to become general in rural areas.⁴⁶

Plantation discipline customarily rested in the hands of the planter, who, considering himself able to manage such matters alone, was likely to resent interference from others or suggestions that the legal authorities decide on punishments for his slaves. Usually only in emergencies did he resort to the courts.⁴⁷

³⁹ A typical ad is in *ibid.*, June 24, 1847.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Sept. 8, 1853.

⁴¹ Original Mortgages, XIV-2, March 19, 1851.

⁴² Original Conveyances, M, Aug. 17, 1857.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, June 25, 1843 (was not recorded until 1857).

⁴⁴ *Planters' Banner*, April 12, 1849.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Feb. 10, 1848.

⁴⁶ V. Alton Moody, "Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, VII (1924), 252.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 221-222.

A frequent problem of the planter was the runaway, and requests for information about such persons appeared in almost every issue of the newspaper. The advertisements often offered small rewards of ten or fifteen dollars. In an unusual type of notice, John Rice proposed to pay fifteen dollars for each of three runaway slaves if lodged in the St. Mary Parish jail, twenty dollars for each lodged in the jails of other parishes, and fifty dollars for each found out of the state.⁴⁸ Apparently many if not most of the St. Mary Negroes spoke both French and English, an ability frequently noted in the advertisements for runaways.

A slave ran away because of harsh or cruel treatment, severe punishments or threats of punishment, or perhaps merely to relieve the monotony of his existence and ease his dissatisfaction with his lot.⁴⁹ Occasionally slaves were incited to flee their masters by free Negroes or whites of antislavery views,⁵⁰ and though only isolated instances of abolitionist activity in St. Mary are noted, their influence was felt in the area. A remarkable siege of cold weather and a snowfall considered practically unparalleled in the history of the parish occasioned an article almost filling a column in the *Banner* and including comments which, though written with tongue in cheek, nevertheless suggests cognizance of antislavery activity:

Oh, these cursed abolitionists are at the bottom of it all!—they are determined to render our slaves so useless here that we will be compelled either to liberate them or take them out of the Union!—on the whole we may safely assert that Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday last were southern days with northern principles.⁵¹

Another newspaper account reported the circulation of abolitionist tracts in Franklin and its vicinity and announced that "the wolf in sheep's clothing, whoever he may be, had better take long strides, keep a straight coat tail, and 'put' for a cooler climate without delay," suggesting that a coat of tar and feathers would be substituted for his wool camouflage and assuring the gentleman under suspicion that "he may take our word for it, that if discovered, he will find the southern climate altogether too hot for him."⁵²

⁴⁸ *Planters' Banner*, May 25, 1848.

⁴⁹ Moody, "Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," *loc. cit.*, VII, 226.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Planters' Banner*, Jan. 17, 1852.

⁵² *Ibid.*, March 29, 1851.

Slave Life

The routine of life on a sugar plantation for both slaves and whites has been fully covered in articles devoted exclusively to that topic and shall be mentioned only incidentally in this study.⁵³ Suffice it to say that the planter usually acted as manager, planning the work of the plantation and employing as his assistant an overseer who supervised the work directly and controlled the slave. Trusted Negro drivers helped the overseer in the capacity of foremen, and slaves were divided into groups according to their laboring skills and abilities. Women and children were usually given the lighter tasks and the aged and crippled also received special consideration in the assignment of their duties.

On a visit to a St. Mary plantation, a traveler saw what use was made of aged slaves in the section. Simple manufactures were often their task, and on one plantation the production of both wool and cotton textiles for domestic use was in their hands; they used what the author described as "the most comprehensive yet simple little cotton machine that has yet been constructed, consisting of a compact frame some 4 or 5 feet long by 1½ wide with half a dozen spindles at one end and a miniature gin at the other. It is easily put in motion with a crank, even by a child; and being supplied with the cotton as gathered in the field, it is ginned, cleaned, corded and spun at one operation."⁵⁴ Though such home textile manufacturing was not entirely unique, other specific instances of similar industries have not come to light, and the frequent appearance of advertisements of ready-made clothing materials suitable for both hands and masters perhaps belies the assumption that home industry was widespread in this area in which cotton was raised only very rarely.⁵⁵ The Weeks plantation, one of the larger and more prosperous in the parish, apparently engaged in little or no manufacture of this sort, for a bill shows the purchase of calico, red flannel, checked cotton, and linsey in large amounts, probably for the use of the Negroes (eight ells of linsey was given to "Old Martha")⁵⁶ as well as finer goods such as black muslin, silk, linen, lace, Bishop's lawn, Swiss insertion, and edging, destined perhaps to adorn the mistress of

⁵³ Outstanding articles on these subjects are: Moody, "Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," and Walter Prichard, "Routine on a Louisiana Sugar Plantation Under the Slavery Regime," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XIV (1927), 168-178. The material in this paragraph is based upon these two sources.

⁵⁴ Allen, "Letters from the South—No. 9," *loc. cit.*, VI, 214.

⁵⁵ MS. Census, IV, 1850 and 1860.

⁵⁶ David Weeks and Family Papers.

the plantation. The purchase of kid gloves, a black silk cravat, and patent leather shoes perchance indicated that Mr. Weeks' sartorial elegance was in keeping with that of his lady. Straw hats and blankets for the Negroes also appear on the bill, along with "Shoes to Servants" and brogans.⁵⁷

A sizable staff of house servants was usually maintained on the larger establishments. These domestics often received better treatment than their fellow slaves and profited from their removal from regular quarters into an establishment more closely connected with the residence of the white family.⁵⁸ Household service was considered by the slaves themselves to be a mark of distinction and a return to the fields was looked on as a disgrace.⁵⁹ The intimate association of whites with their house servants led in many cases to deep mutual affection.⁶⁰

Behind the quarters of the house servants and the other outbuildings attached to the plantation house stood neat rows of Negro cabins, with the sugarhouse and the home of the overseer nearby.⁶¹ The huts of the slaves usually were divided into four rooms shared by two families, each of whom had one of the large front rooms to serve as bedroom and sitting room and one of the smaller ones at the rear for a kitchen and dining room; often there was a gallery at the front of the building. A common chimney between the two larger rooms provided heat for both apartments. Mattresses of grass, moss, or rice straw stood upon rough bedsteads or lay on the floor, and pegs upon the wall served in place of closets.

Maintenance of sanitary conditions in the houses of the slaves required the frequent attention of the overseer or planter.⁶² Indeed, keeping the Negro himself clean was often difficult. A correspondent to the Franklin paper said:

I have known Negroes to remain weeks, with their bodies half exposed to the severest of our cold weather, and in the warmest and sultriest, in the same clothing, until it became thick with filth exuded from their skins, and gathered from that with which they were surrounded.⁶³

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Moody, "Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," *loc. cit.*, VII, 253.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Ruth Bates, "Conditions of Slave Life" (M. A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1913), 11.

⁶¹ This paragraph is based upon Prichard, "Routine on a Louisiana Sugar Plantation," *loc. cit.*, XIV, 168.

⁶² Ralph Butterfield, "Health of Negroes," in *DeBow's Review*, XXV (1858), 572.

⁶³ *Planters' Banner*, August 2, 1849.

Notorious for their proneness to carelessness and unreliability, slaves often stole rails from the fences to start their fires with. In one instance in St. Mary it was reported, though probably as a "tall tale," that a portion of a cabin was destroyed and a young Negress burned to death when she fell asleep while sitting on a stove, apparently unaware that it contained a fire; her master was severely burned when he endeavored to extinguish the blaze.⁶⁴

It was to the planter's interest to see that humane treatment, adequate housing, proper food and clothing kept his Negroes healthy and content; and instances of habitual overwork, as instances of cruelty, were probably rare. Some St. Mary planters were evidently guilty of exacting unduly hard labor from their slaves, for it was said that some worked their hands like mules, starting them at their tasks before dawn, allowing only the noon hour's relaxation during the whole day, keeping them at their jobs in the fields until after dark, and then having them prepare and cook the food needed for that night and the following day.⁶⁵ A correspondent to the *Banner* suggested that during the summer season the hands and work animals be given a respite from their labors from twelve to three o'clock every day.⁶⁶

The grinding season itself was a period of arduous labor for all the working inhabitants of a sugar plantation. The planter as well as the slave made long hours in the sugar mill a habit, often moving himself and his family into specially prepared apartments in the mill. There meals were served and in this unusual setting even the performance of daily household tasks assumed a certain air of festivity.⁶⁷ Despite the strenuous activity required during this period, all—black and white alike—seemed to thrive on the steamy atmosphere, and the hot syrup constantly available. The white children spent many hours in the sugar-house, followed by a train "of every imaginable sized 'little niggers,' that dabble in and devour the sugar and syrup, until they are literally loaded inside and out."⁶⁸

Sundays were days of rest except during the grinding season, and many planters also allowed their Negroes Saturday

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Dec. 15, 1853.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, August 10, 1848.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, May 4, 1858.

⁶⁷ Moody, "Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," *loc. cit.*, VII, 241.

⁶⁸ Thorpe, "Sugar and Sugar Regions of Louisiana," *loc. cit.*, VII, 763.

afternoons in which to cultivate their own little vegetable patches. Often the raising of pigs, chickens, turkeys, etc., was encouraged, and these, with the vegetable produce, were sold to the master, whose payments allowed the blacks to purchase the small fineries and luxuries of which they were so fond.⁶⁹ Occasionally such products were sold by the slave to one of the many peddlars infesting the waterways, a constant source of irritation to the planters whose poultry and vegetables could so easily be pilfered and sold as the slave's own.⁷⁰

Other days affording some relaxation for the Negroes on the plantation were the holidays ending the grinding season. Negroes were allowed complete freedom to do as they wished as long as their activities were harmless; long hours of repose were followed by frequent balls.⁷¹ Some of the more liberal planters permitted dancing quite often throughout the year, usually on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. The celebration of New Year's Day often climaxed this holiday festivity with the distribution of extra rations and new clothing to the blacks, and an evening of dancing and singing.⁷²

In considering the general conditions of slave life in St. Mary Parish, a good view of prevailing ideas of a master's obligations to his chattels is provided by a letter written to the *Franklin Banner* in 1849:

I suppose, sir, you regard yourself as a very good master. Your Negroes are never worked hard except in a pushing time, you give them occasional hollidays [*sic*] when you let them have 'passes' to go to Franklin, Centerville, Pattersonville, or Jeanerett's and buy whatever their money will purchase; you give them four suits of clothes a year, plenty of fat meat to eat with little or no lean in it, and as much calomel, alloes, and quinine as they can stand when sick, in fact twice as much as you would take yourself under similar circumstances. As for his bedding, he does not need much, you think, and if he is not well housed in winter that is his look out and not yours.⁷³

The author went on to suggest that "pushing times" need never occur on the plantation of an efficient master who kept his equipment in good condition by continuous care, and he urged

⁶⁹ Moody, "Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," *loc. cit.*, VII, 256.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁷¹ Thorpe, "Sugar and Sugar Regions of Louisiana," *loc. cit.*, VII, 767.

⁷² Moody, "Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," *loc. cit.*, VII, 278.

⁷³ *Planters' Banner*, August 2, 1849.

that the propensity of Negroes to overindulge in alcohol, tempting but unwholesome food, and tobacco should not be allowed an opportunity for expression.⁷⁴ St. Mary planters must have been more generous in their distribution of clothing than most, for the four suits mentioned above are twice the quota usually given as typical of sugar plantations.⁷⁵

An interesting, though apparently somewhat burlesqued, picture of slave life viewed by a member of that class was given in a statement made to a magazine correspondent by Charles Stewart, a slave on the Porter plantation.⁷⁶ As the manager of the racing stables of various liberal masters, Charles had apparently acquired a bank account of some size, and when he conceived a desire to marry a Negress on a neighboring plantation, he purchased her from her owner for \$350, "... fur I had made a heap dat las' year, more'n I could spend in clo's n' tobacco, more spesherly, too, by reason dat de colonel always give 'em bofe to me; ..." and received the papers giving him the woman of his choice "... to hab an' to hole ... as long as she behave herself." A few years convinced him of his wife's inability to tell the truth, a characteristic he found upsetting. His efforts to meet this problem he related as follows:

I tried 'suasion an' finery, birch rods, split pine, an' a light hickory stick 'bout as thick as my littlest finger, an' I tried makin' her kin an' my kin dat had religion pray fur her at de big camp-meetin'. But it wan't no use. She had three likely arrs, 'bout a year betwixt 'em, an' I never had but dat one fault to find wid her; she cooked as good biskets, hoecake, baconfry, hominy mush, an' coffee as any gal I seed; den, moreober, she could iron an' wash my shirts, an' keep things a-goin' right smart; but she couldn't seem to tell de trufe to save her life, an' it got to be so dat I jes' made my mind up to 'vorce her as quick as eber I could. ... Dar was a horse-dealer ... by de name of Jones, what had de finest nag I had seen in a year fur sale at jes' de bery price I paid fur Betsey. De horse ... was wuf de money, I tell you; so I jes' says to Major Puckett that he could have Betsy back at the same price I paid fur her, an' lowin' fur de war an' tar of de four years I had done kep' her, I would throw de boys into de bargain.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Moody, "Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," *loc. cit.*, VII, 270.

⁷⁶ Stewart, "My Life As A Slave," *loc. cit.*, LXIX, 734. The material in this paragraph is based upon this article.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Crops

Noted for their skill and success in cane cultivation,⁷⁸ the planters of St. Mary often led the state in the growth of that staple.⁷⁹ In the ten years from 1850 to 1860, St. Mary eight times headed the list in sugar production and in the two years in which she did not rank first, 1853 and 1856, she was second and fourth, respectively. The peak year came in 1858, when her production was 44,634 hogsheads, an amount double her production in some leaner years.

Sometimes these leaner years were the result of an unusual "spell" of weather. In the year 1853-54, which saw the production of the largest crop ever grown in ante-bellum Louisiana, St. Mary fell to second-rank position because of an August hurricane which caused great destruction within the parish, in some cases wiping out entire crops of corn and cane, and flattening numbers of homes, outbuildings, and sugarhouses.⁸⁰ Though the twisted cane had apparently recovered to some extent a few weeks after the storm, it was discovered when grinding began that the yield of sugar was very small in proportion to the amount of cane processed.⁸¹ Another year, crevasses in West Baton Rouge and Pointe Coupée parishes resulted in floods damaging holdings along Bayous Boeuf and Teche and on Tiger Island. Plantations on both sides of the Teche suffered, particularly those on the east nearest the lakes which were subject to the overflow.⁸²

Fuel—in a manufacturing process which required three cords of wood for the manufacture of each 1000-pound hogshead of sugar—was always an important item in the planter's budget of expenditures, and in years when the scarcity of wood sent prices up, it might be a large factor in tipping the scales so that plantation overhead outweighed profits, despite large crops.⁸³ Lumber was frequently imported from outside the parish, with Mobile a major source of supply.⁸⁴ In order to avoid the extensive purchase of wood, one of the more prosperous planters of the parish conceived a substitute. As the bagasse came out of the rollers of his mill it was placed in cars on a small elevated railway, which trans-

⁷⁸ Allen, "Letters from the South—No. 9," *loc. cit.*, VI, 213.

⁷⁹ The material in this paragraph is based upon a study of P. A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop, Made in Louisiana, 1845, 1850-1860*.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1856-57, p. vii.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1850-51, pp. 44-46.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1853-54, preface.

⁸⁴ *Planters' Banner*, Sept. 20, 1845.

ported it to sheds where it was tipped out and allowed to dry; this dried bagasse was then consumed as fuel, furnishing about two-thirds of that necessary to run the mill.⁸⁵

About midway of the period under consideration, in 1853, St. Mary produced her second largest crop of the period.⁸⁶ That year there were 175 sugar planters in the parish, forty-two of whom were Creole in descent, the rest "American." Three planters owned two or more plantations each and one of their number was in possession of seven. The 175 sugar estates in the parish, with their sixty-seven mills run by steam power and 115 by horses, yielded an average production of 226 hogsheads of 1,125 pounds each, with the average number of working hands per plantation estimated at thirty-seven.⁸⁷ In the ten years following 1850, the steam mills gradually gained in number so that in 1860 only sixty-nine of the 170 mills in the parish were still horse-driven.⁸⁸ The 101 steam engines of that year represented an increase of thirty from the previous year, when there had been in use in St. Mary, besides the mills already mentioned, eighty-two sugar-houses run by horsepower, two pneumatic batteries, and one vacuum pan.⁸⁹

Marketing

Three methods of marketing his crop lay open to the planter:⁹⁰ first, the product might be shipped to New Orleans or some Atlantic market at which the commission merchant to whom it was consigned sold it to the highest bidder; second, the planter might sell from his plantation wharf to a sugar merchant who bought for northern markets; third, the crop might be sold in the sugarhouse to a speculator who removed it from the plantation and marketed it at his own expense and risk. The last two plans were probably the more widely used, for in each instance the planter knew the price he would receive before the product left his plantation and he had the added advantage of escaping charges for drayage, freight, and commissions.

⁸⁵ Allen, "Letters from the South—No. 9," *loc. cit.*, VI, 214.

⁸⁶ Based on a study of Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop*, for the years 1845, 1850-1860.

⁸⁷ Based on a study of the chart given in Moody, "Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations," *loc. cit.*, VII, 201.

⁸⁸ Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop*, 1859-60.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1858-59.

⁹⁰ This paragraph is based on Prichard, "Routine on a Louisiana Sugar Plantation," *loc. cit.*, XIV, 176-177.

A letter to the *Planters' Banner* gave a perhaps not unusual view of the conditions in which some of the smaller planters occasionally found themselves. The author of the letter, a widow, explained that her property was mortgaged to the extent of \$8,000, and though the interest payments had been met, she had found herself unable to reduce the debt. Her crop in 1851 had yielded fifty-five hogsheads of sugar, 960 barrels of molasses, and corn sufficient to provide for her stock. For her marketed produce she received \$2,720, from which she had to pay \$640 interest, an overseer's wage of \$400, a bill for groceries and plantation supplies amounting to \$345, \$52 for meat, \$215 for the manufacture of hogsheads and barrels, a steamboat bill of \$78—these, together with numerous other expenses, amounted to a sum which left her only \$113.35 profit, an amount not equal to the interest due on the \$3,000 purchase price of her land.⁹¹

Another account of expenditures appearing in the *Planters' Banner* estimated the expenses of a St. Mary planter working twenty-five hands thus:

Commission, freights, etc., at 10%	\$1,225.00
Overseer's salary	800.00
25 bbls. pork, at \$20	500.00
Mechanics' work	500.00
Medical bill	300.00
Clothing for slaves, etc.	500.00
Family expenses	1,500.00
Incidental expenses	500.00
	<hr/>
	\$5,825.00

If one assumes that this same planter made a crop yielding 150 hogsheads of sugar at 1,100 pounds per hogshead at four cents and 600 gallons of molasses at fifteen cents, he would receive a sum of about \$7,500, giving him a profit of about \$1,675 in prosperous years.⁹²

⁹¹ *Planters' Banner*, Sept. 25, 1852.

⁹² *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1852.

The crop was usually sold during the rainy months of December and January, and the condition of the roads, bad enough in wet weather without the deep ruts left by the heavy cane carts, was well nigh prohibitive at that time.⁹³ Year round complaints as to the conditions of the roads were frequent, and it was suggested that a person planning to ride a distance of one mile from Franklin on the New Town road⁹⁴ take with him a Negro and two mules to unbog him.⁹⁵

The seasonal changes in the water level in sections of the route connecting St. Mary with the New Orleans market also presented difficulties. In 1851 a correspondent to the *Planters' Banner* ventured that if every planter shipping sugar during the period of low water could "be aware of the number of somersets which his persecuted and bedeviled crop has to go through before reaching the City, he would feel that such trials are the next thing to martyrdom."⁹⁶ On numerous occasions during the four-day trip from Franklin to New Orleans—a journey of some 420 miles—the hogsheads were rolled off the steamboats onto lighters so that the ship's draft might be decreased to allow safe passage through particularly shallow areas; the sugar was then moved from the lighters to shore, to be brought back when water of sufficient depth was reached once more.⁹⁷ In flood times the pilot was faced with quite the opposite problem and at times descended a section of the waterway stern foremost, using the engine to act as a drag by working the wheels upstream while the boat was rushed along in the opposite direction.⁹⁸

Apparently such navigation difficulties were common, for the steamer *Old Times*, whose schedule appears typical, advertised that she would make two trips a month from the Teche country to New Orleans "provided she does not remain aground in the lakes more than two days in each trip."⁹⁹ Her freight rates for these trips were \$3.50 per hogshead of sugar and \$1 a barrel for molasses; passengers could make the trip for \$10.00.¹⁰⁰

By 1851, the period of fifty-two hours formerly required for the trip had been considerably shortened by the use of rail to

⁹³ Thorpe, "Sugar and Sugar Regions of Louisiana," *loc. cit.*, VII, 766.

⁹⁴ To New Iberia.

⁹⁵ *Planters' Banner*, July 26, 1849.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, March 8, 1851.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Thorpe, "Sugar and Sugar Regions of Louisiana," *loc. cit.*, VII, 750.

⁹⁹ *Planters' Banner*, March 8, 1851.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

make part of the journey. The plan called for travel by steamer from points on the Teche to a depot on Grand River, thence by railroad to Donaldsonville, and then on to New Orleans by steamer. Passengers making use of these improved transportation facilities could make the trip from Franklin to the city in fifteen hours at a cost of \$5.00; the freight charged on sugar was \$2.00 per hogshead and on molasses \$.50 a barrel.¹⁰¹

Certain of these steamboats plying the route between the Teche and its nearest large market were quite spacious, some accommodating as many as forty passengers.¹⁰² The *A. Fuselier* boasted wide and comfortable berths and proclaimed the saloons in both the men's and women's departments tastefully furnished,¹⁰³ while the *Camden* prided itself on the installation of new furniture and bedding and guaranteed the boat to be "entirely free from cockroaches, bedbugs, and other pestiferous insects, which are so annoying to travelers."¹⁰⁴ Delays of two or three days en route occasionally impelled passengers to desert such comforts and seek private transportation in smaller boats.¹⁰⁵

In 1853 the line of the New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western Railroad had been surveyed through St. Mary Parish. This addition to the transportation facilities of the area no doubt considerably speeded the movement of goods, for a section of the tortuous 40 mile waterway was replaced by twelve and a half miles of railroad along a direct route covering in twenty-two miles the same territory as the old water route.¹⁰⁶

A large part of the sugar product of St. Mary was marketed from the customhouse at the port of Franklin, whence it was shipped directly to the Atlantic markets.¹⁰⁷ Having direct access to the Atlantic ports probably made it easier for the planter of St. Mary to gauge the profits available at various markets and to ship his crop accordingly. Sugar prices in New Orleans, Richmond, St. Croix, Porto Rico, and Havana appeared quite regularly in the local newspaper.¹⁰⁸ William Hall wrote W. H. Weeks in 1849 that he was pleased to hear that that planter was sending

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Jan. 9, 1851.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, May 17, 1851.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, June 28, 1851.

¹⁰⁵ Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 119.

¹⁰⁶ Original Conveyances, May 21, 1853; "Attakapas and Mississippi Railroad," in *DeBou's Review*, VIII (1850), 391-392.

¹⁰⁷ Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop*, 1860-61.

¹⁰⁸ *Planters' Banner*, Oct. 28, 1847.

another shipment of his sugar to Mobile, as good sugar was at a premium there.¹⁰⁹ Commission merchants from widespread areas advertised in the Franklin newspaper—J. V. Bacon and Son at Boston,¹¹⁰ John E. Foley in New York,¹¹¹ Joseph Hall in Mobile,¹¹² A. C. Ainsworth,¹¹³ Peterson and Stuart,¹¹⁴ and M. M. Matthews and Company in New Orleans¹¹⁵ are but a few of the many that might be named.

Despite the emphasis on sugar cane, other crops were not neglected. In 1850, of the 208 farmers listed in the Agricultural Schedule, twenty-one made no sugar and twenty-three no molasses.¹¹⁶ Nine of those not cultivating cane had apparently chosen cotton as their money crop, for they ginned an average of about nine and a half bales each. Two of this group, Leon Frilot and Baptiste Charlette, also raised rice, the only farmers in the parish who engaged in rice culture. That same year all but two farmers raised corn, and all but thirty-two raised sweet potatoes. Only one planter in the parish, D. D. Richardson, raised Irish potatoes.

Apparently the practice suggested by agricultural reformers of raising all plantation supplies possible¹¹⁷ did not become more popular in the ten years following 1850, for in 1860 of 271 farmers listed as agriculturalists, only fourteen made no sugar or molasses, none were listed as raising sweet potatoes or rice, or as slaughtering their own animals, and twenty-six raised no corn. Only six ginned cotton. One must accept these statistics questioningly for it seems strange that of all 176 farmers raising sweet potatoes in 1850, not one was cultivating that product ten years later. On the other hand, corn production increased; in 1850, only 17 crops totaling over 3500 bushels were listed, but in 1860 the number in that category is fifty-seven. Invoices from the Weeks plantation show that the purchase of pork, mackerel, bacon, butter, flour, turnips, oats, and similar foods was not at all infrequent.¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁹ Letter from William Hall to W. H. Weeks, Feb. 3, 1847, David Weeks and Family Papers.

¹¹⁰ *Planters' Banner*, Jan. 9, 1851.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1849.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Oct. 7, 1847.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, Oct. 28, 1847.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 9, 1847.

¹¹⁶ Except where otherwise noted, the material in this and the following paragraph is based upon MS. Census, IV, 1850 or 1860, as indicated in the text.

¹¹⁷ *Planters' Banner*, Dec. 9, 1847.

¹¹⁸ David Weeks and Family Papers.

Apparently most garden vegetables could be grown with ease in the climate of St. Mary. Peaches, pears, plums, and quinces were also raised;¹¹⁹ even an occasional exotic, such as the pineapple, reached maturity without hotbed assistance.¹²⁰ These products were evidently for home consumption only, for the census of 1850 gives St. Mary no listing for the value of market gardens or orchard produce.¹²¹

Livestock

A contemporary of the period declared that the majority of Creole planters were stock raisers and thus were enabled to provide their slaves with beef from their own plantations, while American farmers, less inclined to gather large herds, had to continue their purchase of pork no matter how high its price.¹²²

A native breed of horses, commonly referred to as "Creole horses", often provided their masters against the necessity of buying mules, for they had, along with feet and eyes suggestive of Andalusian stock, the endurance of the mule and, it was claimed by their supporters, the spirit of the thoroughbred.¹²³ The frequent importation of mules—usually brought in time to begin the grinding season¹²⁴—was noted in the Franklin papers: within two months a drove of 100 mules had arrived in the parish from Texas¹²⁵ and A. M. Forbes of Missouri had exported 150 of his animals to St. Mary.¹²⁶ The almost yearly attacks of the disease, charbon, on the mules, horses, and cattle helped make such importations necessary.¹²⁷ Another cause given for the annual destruction of large numbers of livestock were the "bad range and bad weather" and it was noted that the majority of the stock had to subsist on grass alone as well as suffer the winter weather without shelter.¹²⁸ In some years droughts erased prairie ponds and numbers of the livestock on the islands of St. Mary felt their lack severely.¹²⁹

¹¹⁹ *DeBow's Review*, I, After the War Series (1866), 213.

¹²⁰ *Planters' Banner*, Oct. 18, 1849.

¹²¹ *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 252.

¹²² Richardson, "Teche Country Fifty Years Ago," *loc. cit.*, IV, 593.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ The advertisement in the *Planters' Banner*, Sept. 21, 1846, is typical.

¹²⁵ *Planters' Banner*, August 10, 1848.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, Sept. 21, 1848.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, May 29, 1852.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1851.

¹²⁹ Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop*, 1851-52, preface.

Besides these work animals, a few blooded cattle had been imported into St. Mary. In 1847 James Porter brought in some purebred Southdown sheep and an Ayrshire bull of blooded stock.¹³⁰ Oaklawn plantation also boasted Devon and Shorthorn cattle and some fine English horses related to famous racing thoroughbreds of Great Britain.¹³¹ Stables of larger plantations such as that one might include stalls for 50 to 100 mules and horses, and with the granary, sheds, and various other outbuildings usually in their vicinity, made an impressive picture.¹³²

The value of barnyard manure as a fertilizing agent had been discovered and it was beginning to be used in St. Mary in 1851;¹³³ the use was apparently not extensive, for the following year it was considered lamentable, "and disgusting even, to see what a waste is going on in this country of one of the richest and most valuable manures known."¹³⁴

Overcropping was considered common in the parish and some planters in St. Mary argued that a farmer could make more money by cultivating seven acres to each hand than by any more ambitious effort.¹³⁵ The opinions of particularly successful farmers were regarded with respect, and information by such persons frequently appeared in the *Banner*.¹³⁶ This interest in the findings of others led to an attempt to organize an Agricultural and Horticultural Association of St. Mary Parish in February of 1853, but the project apparently lapsed during the summer,¹³⁷ for it was not until the following January that notices of the meetings began to appear.¹³⁸

CHAPTER IV

TOWN LIFE

Locations of Towns: General Description

A gazetteer published in 1854 listed four towns in St. Mary Parish: Franklin, Charenton, Centerville, and Pattersonville.

¹³⁰ *Planters' Banner*, April 8, 1847.

¹³¹ Allen, "Letters from the South—No. 9," *loc. cit.*, VI, 214.

¹³² Thorpe, "Sugar and Sugar Regions of Louisiana," *loc. cit.*, VII, 754.

¹³³ *Planters' Banner*, Jan. 16, 1851.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1852.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, March 15, 1849.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, June 29, 1848.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, June 9, 1853.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 19, 1854.

Starting at the southern edge of the parish and moving northwest along the Teche one first reached Pattersonville, a town located about eight miles from Berwick's Bay and having about 600 inhabitants.¹ It was of fairly recent development, as was evidenced by a comment in 1849 to the effect that "It has never, until of late shown much signs of thrift. . . ."² Strategically located with reference to the natural trade routes of the nearby bayous and lakes and Berwick's Bay, the little town contained two meetinghouses, a seminary in the process of erection (in which it was proposed that two schools would be kept in constant operation), and several expanding businesses.³ Two or three stores furnished the surrounding territory with clothing, staple and dry goods, and plantation necessities.⁴ Beers and Whaley engaged in the commission business, and C. B. S. Whelden operated a lumber mill in the vicinity.⁵ The United States Hotel, later Thompson's, one block below the post office, offered board and lodging at two dollars a day or thirty dollars per month.⁶

Twelve miles above Pattersonville, on the south side of the Teche, lay Centerville, in 1853 a tiny hamlet of about 200 inhabitants.⁷ Despite its size it was the seat of several thriving business enterprises. These included numerous stores, a sawmill making cypress lumber,⁸ an icehouse of 350 tons capacity which sold the "best kind of Boston ice" more cheaply than that commodity could be procured from New Orleans,⁹ and a "general mercantile and coopering business."¹⁰ Refrigerators of a sort¹¹ and a "newly invented Yankee contrivance for washing clothes,"¹² were offered for sale by enterprising Centerville citizens. The village had several inns; but for a period in 1850, it was without a grogshop.¹³

¹ T. Baldwin and J. Thomas, *A New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States Giving a Full and Comprehensive Review of the Present Condition, Industry, and Resources of the American Confederacy: Embracing, Also, Important Topographical, Statistical, and Historical Information From Recent and Original Sources; Together with the Results of the Census of 1850, and Population and Statistics in Many Cases to 1853* (Philadelphia, 1854), 886. Hereafter cited: *New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States*.

² *Planters' Banner*, Jan. 25, 1849.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Based on a study of the files of *ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1849.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 21, 1854.

⁷ *New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States*, 212.

⁸ *Planters' Banner*, Sept. 20, 1845.

⁹ *Ibid.*, April 18, 1850; Feb. 13, 1851.

¹⁰ Original Conveyances, St. Mary Parish, I, June 9, 1852.

¹¹ *Planters' Banner*, July 17, 1852.

¹² *Ibid.*, March 9, 1848.

¹³ *Ibid.*, July 4, 1850.

Indian Bend, or Charenton, was a tiny post village north of Franklin, about eighty miles, by water, from the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁴ Above this village was Jeanerette, at this time a town with only a few small stores and a post office.¹⁵ In 1857, following a period of animated real-estate speculation on Berwick's Bay, Brashear City was laid out beside the railroad route through the area, and lots valued from \$300 to \$540 were sold.¹⁶ A bright future was predicted for the town, and rumors of the location of the chief custom-house there continued to spread throughout the period.¹⁷

Franklin: Port

The most important town of the area was Franklin, the port of entry for the Teche and the parish seat of St. Mary.¹⁸ Located sixty-five miles by water from the Gulf of Mexico, the town included in 1850, 540 white citizens, 58 free persons of color, and 293 slaves, giving it a total of 891 inhabitants.¹⁹ Three years later its population was reported to have increased to 1400;²⁰ such a large gain in such a short period of time is almost unbelievable and must be accepted with some reservation, despite the evidence of increasing prosperity in the area. One commentator remarked in 1851 that "No inland southern town of the size presents the business, life-like appearance of Franklin."²¹ The *Planters' Banner* reported that the town could supply all a planter's needs, importing goods directly from many northern cities.²²

Franklin's port was to a large extent responsible for her prosperity.²³ Ships from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Richmond, Galveston, Jamaica, Bermuda, Vera Cruz, Havana, and Matagorda lined her wharves, and there were already almost daily arrivals and departures as early as 1845.²⁴ Cargoes of lime, cement, brick, and similar materials from New York, lumber

¹⁴ *New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States*, 216.

¹⁵ Richardson, "Teche Country Fifty Years Ago," *loc. cit.*, IV, 596.

¹⁶ Original Conveyances, M, April 20, 1857.

¹⁷ *Planters' Banner*, March 9, 1854.

¹⁸ *New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States*, 402.

¹⁹ *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington, 1853), 474.

²⁰ *New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States*, 354.

²¹ *Planters' Banner*, March 29, 1851.

²² *Ibid.*, June 24, 1847.

²³ Unless otherwise indicated, the material in this paragraph is based upon a study of the files of the *Planters' Banner*.

²⁴ *Planters' Banner*, Jan. 3, 1846.

from Mobile, and various other imports were exchanged at Franklin for the shipments of sugar and molasses that were the chief exports of the region. On one Sunday in 1848 nine vessels were in the port at once, among them two brigs of 175 tons each.²⁵

In a single month in 1846, 2,230 hogsheads and fifteen barrels of sugar, and 225 hogsheads and 2,270 barrels of molasses left Franklin. The largest part of these exports went to Richmond, which received 1,020 hogsheads of sugar and 1,185 barrels of molasses. Other shipments for the month went to New York, Baltimore, and Mobile, in that order.²⁶

Trade at Franklin increased tremendously during the antebellum period. In 1847, seventy-one coastwise vessels and nine vessels from foreign ports, having an aggregate tonnage of 8,158 tons, entered the port. The seventy vessels totaling 7,847 tons that left the town during the same period took with them cargoes of 6,735 hogsheads of sugar, eleven barrels of the same product; 1,671 hogsheads and 7,973 barrels of molasses; and 30,700 feet of live oak timber.²⁷ Besides these products, Franklin also shipped out sixty-three bales of moss, 200 sacks of corn, and 5,000 feet of lumber other than live oak.²⁸

A phenomenal increase in the trade of the port took place during the following year. Crew members totaling 736 men brought in 125 coastwise ships of an aggregate tonnage of 15,319. The thirty-two foreign ships, manned by 205 sailors, displaced 4,601 tons. The number of importing vessels fell a little below those exporting: the 145 ships leaving Franklin carried away 18,522 tons, some 1,394 tons less than the incoming trade. The exports for the year including 16,589 hogsheads and fourteen barrels of sugar, 2,742 hogsheads and 19,644 barrels of molasses, and 55,900 feet of live oak timber.²⁹

In 1853, the commerce of Franklin was still gaining over that of previous years. The twenty-four vessels from foreign ports aggregated 3,582 tons and the ninety-eight coastal ships 13,812 tons. The 126 vessels clearing the port had an aggregate of 19,912 tons. A total of 19,064 hogsheads of sugar and 41,194 barrels of molasses was exported during the year.³⁰

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 7, 1848.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 14, 1847.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Feb. 8, 1849.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 20, 1848.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Feb. 8, 1849.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1854.

From the figures available in the *Planters' Banner*, New York was the leading importer of the products of St. Mary.³¹ Next came Richmond, with Baltimore, Mobile, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah, and Boston following in that order. It is interesting to note that the only export to Boston was hogsheads of molasses, a product which only she and New York purchased in that container.

Franklin acted as a distributing center for the products received at her wharves. Goods from the North destined for the Opelousas area landed at the port, went by carriage to Indian Village, where they were often stored for a time and then moved on as freight to their final destination.³² Steamboats traveling from Franklin up the Teche as far as St. Martinville acted as distributing agents for the port of entry also, making stops to unload freight and passengers at all intermediate landings. Points along Berwick's Bay and Bayous Boeuf and Black also received goods from these agents.³³ In the spring of 1850 four steamboats regularly plied the route between New Orleans and the Attakapas area.³⁴

The difficulties of navigation in sections of the water route connecting Franklin with the Gulf of Mexico necessitated the frequent use of special pilots familiar with the area. In June of 1850, an act was passed to define and regulate the duties of the pilots of the Atchafalaya Bay and River. The Governor of Louisiana was to appoint not over six pilots from a group of men who had lived in the state at least two years and had been citizens of the United States for a similar period, and who had been certified by the Clerk of the Police Jury of St. Mary as qualified to act as branch pilots. Every branch pilot was to have certain sureties totaling \$1000 approved by the Mortgage Recorder of St. Mary, and was subject to a \$500 fine or three to six months in prison if he refused to go on board a ship which was in need of his services.³⁵

A large amount of Franklin's shipping was carried on during the month of January, at which time the District Court was in session in that town. Planters throughout the parish attending

³¹ The material in this paragraph was compiled from figures published in the *Planters' Banner*.

³² *Planters' Banner*, Dec. 30, 1847.

³³ Based upon a study of files of *ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, April 4, 1850.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1850.

court as litigants, jurors, or witnesses found it most convenient to meet then with the commission merchants in town during the peak of the shipping season and so make their arrangements for marketing their crops.³⁶

Civic Services

The District Court met at Franklin twice yearly and the time of its meeting was a period of unusual activity for the town. Persons from all parts of the parish attended the court for business or pleasure, often spending several weeks in the vicinity while their cases were pending. Sometimes they waited for one or more sessions, away from their homes and employment, until the case with which they were concerned came before the Judge. Neither witnesses nor jurors were paid enough to meet their tavern bills and thus were forced to draw upon private means to pay expenses, often a great hardship to those in the lower economic groups.³⁷ The sessions were usually long, some lasting over a month,³⁸ and complaints as to the slowness of court action were frequent.³⁹ The fact that Franklin had fifteen rising young lawyers anxious to make their marks in the legal world was not considered a factor favorable to expediting the session; apparently lawyers as a class were not exceedingly popular in the vicinity, if one may judge from a comment in the *Banner*:

The District Court is again in session in this place, and the lawyers are again in town. . . . Courts of Justice, lawyers and lawsuits are doubtless necessary, and so are bleeding and blistering in certain cases, but they are a pretty severe tax upon those who become too intimate with them.⁴⁰

These sessions of the District Court met at the Franklin courthouse, a community center where political meetings, church services, holiday celebrations, and various other activities often took place.⁴¹ In 1849 the standing structure was sarcastically spoken of as "aged and venerable" and some citizens "began to think it about time for owls, and bats, and serpents to take possession of the antiquated Court House. . . ."⁴² Such criticism

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Feb. 10, 1853.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, June 10, 1856.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, June 28, 1850.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1850.

⁴¹ Based on a study of the files of *ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, Feb. 22, 1849.

must have had some effect, for four months later the Police Jury authorized an appropriation of \$9,000 for a new courthouse, private citizens subscribed \$3,000, and Judge Wilkinson gave \$1,000.⁴³ The new building was to have a main center section forty feet square to be used exclusively as a courtroom, and two wings, each containing two offices or jury rooms sixteen by twenty feet. The porticos at the front and back were to be supported by heavy pillars, and the walls, foundation, and cornice of the building were to be brick.⁴⁴ Some public indignation was aroused when the contract for the construction of the edifice was awarded to Judge Baker, whose \$12,000 bid was \$750 higher than that of Weldon. The explanation given for such unusual action was that Weldon and his forty Negroes, not being natives of St. Mary, would take the cash paid them out of the parish.⁴⁵ Apparently the use of local labor did not hasten construction, for in August of 1850 it was remarked that "our new court-house . . . is in its erection a true representative of the law—'dragging its slow length along!'"⁴⁶

The Town Council and the Police Jury also customarily met in the courthouse.⁴⁷ In regulating the government of Franklin, the Town Council frequently had to deal with public nuisances. Swine had been allowed to roam freely about the streets until 1849, when an ordinance was passed declaring hogs outlawed and giving any person the right to shoot any such animals running at large within the corporation limits.⁴⁸ As late as 1853, complaints were made about the herding of cattle in the thoroughfares of the town.⁴⁹ According to the *Banner* some citizens also found the dogs of the village disturbing:

Was there ever any other Christian town so infested by such an execrable throng of uncivil mongrels, of every possible mixture, as our own beautiful and otherwise quiet Franklin? . . . It is dangerous to walk the streets in the night: if one is by any means belated in returning to his lodgings, he has to fight his way through a whole legion of dogs, and if he is not well armed with a good cane, or other weapon, he sometimes finds himself engaged in an unequal contest. There are

⁴³ *Ibid.*, March 31, June 7, 1849.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, June 19, 1849.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, June 26, 1849.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1850.

⁴⁷ Police Jury Proceedings, Oct. 18, 1847, as published in *ibid.*, Oct. 21, 1847; Minutes of the Town Council, June 6, 1854, as published in *ibid.*, June 8, 1854.

⁴⁸ Minutes of the Town Council, March 5, 1849, as published in *ibid.*, March 8, 1849.

⁴⁹ *Planters' Banner*, April 7, 1853.

indeed some portions of our village to which ladies dare not venture to visit their friends, for fear of the myriads of dogs that throng the streets.⁵⁰

Evidently not only the animals of Franklin required regulation, for in 1854 the Town Council passed an ordinance requiring a small fine or a light jail sentence from any one found lying drunk upon the streets or in any public place in the village. Any person permitting riotous or disorderly conduct, profane or obscene language, or indecent exhibitions in his place of business was liable to a fine of ten to fifty dollars for each offense; everyone participating was similarly liable.⁵¹

City regulations were made governing the erection of chimneys, hearths, forges, ovens, furnaces, and stables, and the digging of wells. Persons placing obstructions of any nature in the streets or public places to impede travel or frighten horses were subject to a fine of ten dollars and were required to remove the obstruction. A five-dollar fine was the punishment for ditching across sidewalks without placing a substantial bridge over the ditch.⁵²

The sidewalks of Franklin were frequently a subject for discussion. In 1848, a complaint had been made as to the manner in which the ditches and streets had been worked, leaving the citizens, "... not alone over our heels, but nearly to our knees in mud;" the author of the protesting article suggested that the back streets be shelled and drained.⁵³ Sidewalks of the same area needed to be widened, as they were almost too narrow for one person to walk in comfort.⁵⁴ Evidently some attempts were made to improve these conditions, for the following year a letter from "Anti-Shells" complained of the walks of shells, a material which in his opinion made them fit neither for wet nor dry weather and gave those using the walks (many preferred the streets) a gait reminiscent of that of a person suffering with gout.⁵⁵ Two years later letters protesting the use of shells on the sidewalks were still appearing in the Franklin paper, and one critic also mentioned the roots of trees which formed miniature snags dangerous to an unwary traveler at night.⁵⁶ It was suggested that the Town Council

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, July 5, 1851.

⁵¹ Minutes of the Town Council, June 6, 1854, as published in *ibid.*, June 8, 1854.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Planters' Banner*, Dec. 28, 1848.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, April 7, 1853.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 20, 1849.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, June 7, 1851.

be compelled to walk down the shells, so as to make the thoroughfares usable, "and if each member will only take his share of the curses and denunciations showered upon the Council for this act, we promise that the weight of each will be so increased as to make the task an easy one. . . ." ⁵⁷

The roads of the parish connecting Franklin with the other villages of St. Mary also received their share of criticism. An elderly citizen claimed that the caleche which had become a necessity since his advanced age made horseback riding impossible was rendered useless by the condition of the highways. He said:

. . . It would have taken two yoke of oxen to drag my caleche through some portions of the public highway. . . . Some also who have the finest carriages, of which there are fifty to one in comparison to the number twenty years ago, have the worst road in front of their own dwellings. ⁵⁸

A near disaster on Berwick's Bay was credited to the bad condition of the roads and bridges considered by the victim to be characteristic of the whole area. ⁵⁹

The Police Jury of St. Mary was held responsible for the poor transportation facilities of the parish, ⁶⁰ and at its frequent meetings in Franklin evidently attempted to improve the situation. The area was divided into a number of road wards, ⁶¹ and commissioners were appointed to choose locations for various public highways in different parts of the parish. ⁶² About \$1,800 of the annual expenditures of St. Mary (which usually totaled around \$7,750) was devoted to the upkeep of public roads and bridges. ⁶³

One means of raising money to meet governmental expenditures was by taxing the various businesses of the village. In 1850 hawkers and peddlers "on horse or otherwise" had to pay a tax of thirty dollars per annum; wholesale or retail merchants, grocers, traders, dealers, and druggists were assessed twenty dollars yearly, and restaurant owners had to pay half that sum. Proprietors of a depot for the sale of slaves were charged fifty dollars, and a proprietor of a public stable paid twenty. Each

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, June 19, 1852.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1849.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, June 30, 1853.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1849.

⁶¹ Police Jury Proceedings, Oct. 18, 1847, as published in *ibid.*, Oct. 21, 1847.

⁶² Police Jury Proceedings, April 15, 22, 1850, as published in *ibid.*, May 2, 1850.

⁶³ Based upon a study of the Police Jury Proceedings published in *ibid.*, of which those in the issue of March 2, 1848, are an example.

billiard table in the town was taxed thirty-seven and a half dollars, and each tenpin alley fifty.⁶⁴ Evidently some antagonism had recently been aroused against grogshops, for whereas the tax on that type of business had been only fifty dollars in 1848,⁶⁵ it was raised to \$300 the following year,⁶⁶ and in 1850 was \$250.⁶⁷

These taxes should have given the Town Council a sizable budget, for there were many merchants and businessmen in Franklin. For some time after June, 1848, all meats, vegetables, and other provisions offered for sale within the town limits had to be vended from the city market house. This market offered its stalls free to all but persons selling meat, who were required to pay twenty-five dollars rent. Goods were to be offered for sale from four in the morning until two in the afternoon, and a ten-dollar fine punished each violation of the regulations.⁶⁸ A comment the following year suggested that such an arrangement was not entirely satisfactory: "We have a market . . . but we have never heard of any one person's getting the gout by patronizing it. . . . Nothing is sold there that would make an epicure's eyes glisten."⁶⁹

Commercial and Social Centers

Perhaps the more tasty foods were available at the stores of private individuals. William Emmer's bakery, confectionery, and fruit store would prepare cakes for parties "at the shortest notice,"⁷⁰ and numerous storekeepers sold fancy as well as staple groceries.⁷¹ Augustus Knapp offered candies at twelve and a half cents a pound, bacon for five and one-half to seven and one-fourth cents per pound, a like amount of cheese at five and one-half to nine and one-fourth cents, and lard at eight and one-half to ten cents.⁷² Two oysterhouses opened within a week of each other in October of 1847, offering oysters raw, stewed, fried, in gumbo or in soup; fresh oysters were opened and delivered for one dollar per hundred.⁷³ The Franklin Apothecary Hall dispensed ice creams and

⁶⁴ Minutes of the Town Council, Jan. 21, 1850, as published in *ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1850.

⁶⁵ *Planters' Banner*, Feb. 24, 1848.

⁶⁶ Minutes of the Town Council, Jan. 15, 1849, as published in *ibid.*, Jan. 18, 1849.

⁶⁷ Minutes of the Town Council, Jan. 21, 1850, as published in *ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1850.

⁶⁸ Police Jury Proceedings, June 3, 1848, as published in *ibid.*, June 8, 1848.

⁶⁹ *Planters' Banner*, Jan. 25, 1849.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, April 8, 1849.

⁷¹ One example is James Parkerson's ad in *ibid.*, Oct. 28, 1847.

⁷² Original Estates, XXXI, Feb. 3, 1847.

⁷³ *Planters' Banner*, Oct. 28, 1847.

syrups at its soda fountain, and the Ice Cream Saloon on the corner of Main and Commerce offered those refreshments in addition to iced lemonade, ginger pop, and soda water.⁷⁴ Wine stores, tobacco shops, and numerous coffeehouses and grogshops also offered their wares to the Franklin populace.⁷⁵ Ice was sold in the town⁷⁶ and bottled beer was delivered from Berwick's Bay to Jeanerette twice a week throughout the year.⁷⁷

Many of the stores sold dry goods and clothing as well as foodstuffs.⁷⁸ Levy's Emporium had fine cashmeres, watersilks, changeable silks, black satin mantillas, and needleworked capes.⁷⁹ Bloch and Godchaux's establishment offered ball dresses, hats, caps, and other ready-made clothing for sale,⁸⁰ and Miss Bristol, milliner and mantuamaker, offered to manufacture bonnets to order.⁸¹ There were numerous tailors in Franklin and several bootmakers as well.⁸²

The barber who opened a shop in Franklin in 1848 made wigs and toupees and offered his services to the ladies as a hairdresser, having had thirty years of barbering experience in Paris.⁸³ A bathhouse had been installed at Gordy's Hotel in 1848, and offered baths of pure cistern water, fifty cents for hot baths and thirty-seven and one-half cents for cold; showers were twenty-five cents.⁸⁴ Other services available at the hotel often included portrait painting and the taking of daguerreotypes, for the itinerant artists and photographers passing through St. Mary usually set up their businesses at Franklin.⁸⁵

In 1848, the *Banner* reported that there were two carriage builders, two carriage trimmers and harness makers, a carriage-smith, a cabinetmaker, a plowmaker, a gunsmith, three watchmakers, several coopers, and a tin- and coppersmith in Franklin.⁸⁶ There were also a blacksmith shop,⁸⁷ several brickmaking con-

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, August 17, 1848.

⁷⁵ Based upon a study of the files of *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, May 20, 1847.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, May 6, 1847.

⁷⁸ The ad of Parkerson and Randler, *ibid.*, April 27, 1848, is an example.

⁷⁹ *Planters' Banner*, Nov. 4, 1847.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Nov. 2, 1848.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 14, 1848.

⁸² Based upon a study of the files of *ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, August 31, 1848.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, June 21, 1848.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1846; Feb. 18, 1847.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, June 8, 1848.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, 1845.

cerns,⁸⁸ a stonecutting establishment, which made monuments, tombs, and slabs for sideboards and mantels,⁸⁹ and a firm selling and hanging wallpaper.⁹⁰ Numerous stables offered to rent sulkies⁹¹ or provide for horses left in their care.⁹²

The gathering of the salt supply for South Louisiana was not mentioned in the *Planters' Banner* for the period, but some of the product probably was distributed through Franklin, as the chief source for the region was in the salt springs of Petite Anse Island.⁹³

Postage rates in 1845, as now, varied with the weight of the letter and the distance it was to travel. Letters of less than one-half ounce going 300 miles, or less, could be mailed for five cents; if the destination exceeded 300 miles, the cost was ten cents, and a five-cent increase was charged on each additional half-ounce, or part thereof, above the original one-half ounce paid for. Letters traveling less than thirty miles were delivered free of charge.⁹⁴ In the summer of 1847, it was announced that stamps were to be used and that the local post office would soon have a supply on hand.⁹⁵

In 1845, the New Orleans mail arrived at Franklin every Tuesday and Friday at five in the morning and left at noon on the same day; the Opelousas mail arrived at noon on the same two days of the week, and left at five in the afternoon.⁹⁶ In 1847 the irregularity of the mails was attributed "in great measure to the wear and tear of horseflesh on our route," and the contractor announced that he hoped the new mail steamboat would soon be ready to use.⁹⁷ By 1848, mail service had been so improved as to deliver letters leaving Franklin Tuesday afternoon in New Orleans by noon on Friday; letters mailed in New Orleans on Sunday morning got to Franklin the following Tuesday and those sent on Wednesday morning arrived at the St. Mary port on Friday.⁹⁸

⁸⁸ The ad of Freeman Welsh in *ibid.*, July 29, 1847, is an example.

⁸⁹ *Planters' Banner*, May 4, 1848.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Jan. 18, 1849.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, 1845.

⁹² *Ibid.*, Jan. 6, 1848.

⁹³ Rock salt was discovered there in May, 1862. Jackson Beauregard Davis, "The Life of Richard Taylor," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXIV (1941), 70.

⁹⁴ *Planters' Banner*, Nov. 1, 1845.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, August 19, 1847.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1845.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Jan. 14, 1847.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, April 6, 1848.

Though the mail connection with New Orleans was regular, the one between Franklin and the more northern areas of the state was quite erratic. At one time copies of the *Natchitoches Chronicle* for February 22 and March 1, the *Opelousas Gazette* for February 26, March 5, 12, and 19, and the *St. Landry Whig* for March 8 and 25 all reached Franklin on April 2.⁹⁹ In June of 1851 a mail driver from Opelousas was halted by a person who threatened him with a cane knife and wounded him slightly in the thigh; the carrier fired on him and the man left. It was noted that the mail drivers on that route always traveled well armed.¹⁰⁰ The following month the mail arrived at Franklin "so saturated in consequence of the boat's capsizing in the lake, as to render a large portion of it useless."¹⁰¹

In 1854 the mail route was improved so that on mail days New Orleans morning papers reached Franklin that night. Such expeditious service was made possible by the use of the railroad between New Orleans and Bayou Lafourche; Attakapas mail traveled by boat from that point.¹⁰²

Organizations

Another type of service to the community was rendered by the local fire company, Germania. Organized in July of 1847, it was originally made up of about thirty German citizens of Franklin under the presidency of a local druggist, William Rabe.¹⁰³ The group had special uniforms and held regular meetings, notices of which were printed in German in the local paper.¹⁰⁴ In case of fire, any person could obtain the services of the company and the engine if they sent in two gentle horses, unharnessed, and applied at the home of Captain Rabe, Bersheim's Coffee House, or Erbeling's Barber Shop for a key to the engine house. The alarm was to be given by ringing the church and courthouse bells, at which sound the members of the company assembled.¹⁰⁵ At a fire in April of 1848 the company turned out promptly, but the lack of buckets and a suitable suction hose made it nearly

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, April 5, 1851.

¹⁰⁰ Such a list appears in *ibid.*, Jan. 11, 1849.

¹⁰¹ *Planters' Banner*, August 9, 1851.

¹⁰² Presumably near the present site of Jeanerette.

¹⁰³ *Planters' Banner*, July 29, 1847.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Oct. 28, 1847.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 9, 1847.

impossible to use the engine.¹⁰⁶ Blame for the frequent fires in the area was usually placed on unknown incendiaries, and in 1851, it was decided that more watchmen were needed to prevent such arson.¹⁰⁷ Soon afterward seven patrol squads with seven members apiece were formed; each was to patrol from nine at night to four in the morning one night a week. Fines of two dollars were levied against absentees who did not send a substitute.¹⁰⁸ These measures were followed up by certain precautionary ordinances passed by the Town Council concerning the positions of stoves and stovepipes in relation to various inflammable materials.¹⁰⁹

A favorite gathering place for citizens of Franklin was the Reading Room. There LaTourette's *Map of Louisiana*, Morse's *North American Atlas*, bound copies of the *Planters' Banner* since 1836, and many of the leading journals and periodicals of the nation offered diversion and edification. Chess tables, a cabinet of curiosities, Robert Cruikshank's illustrations entitled "The Bottle,"¹¹⁰ and the Franklin Circulating Library also occupied places in the Reading Room. One might read books by George Sand, Harriet Martineau, Charles Dickens, Alexander Dumas, Jane Austin, and many others among the library's collection of over 300 volumes.¹¹¹ Persons were charged five dollars a year or seventy-five cents a month for the use of the Reading Room facilities; strangers could enjoy its advantages for one week free of charge.¹¹²

The Reading Room was for a time located on the second story of the Odd Fellows Hall.¹¹³ This building, often called Union Hall, was owned principally by the Franklin branch of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, whose 115¹¹⁴ members held their meetings in the large lodge room on the third floor of the edifice. The building had been erected in 1849 at a cost exceeding \$10,000. It measured forty by eighty feet and was three stories high.¹¹⁵ Soon after its completion the Order had installed an organ which was reported to have been made to order in Paris.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, April 20, 1848.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Nov. 8, 1851.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Nov. 15, 1851.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, June 8, 1854.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Jan. 20, March 16, 1848.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, April 15, Nov. 11, 1847.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Sept. 3, 1847; Sept. 6, 1849.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1850.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, March 22, 1849.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, June 28, 1849.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 10, 1850.

The Franklin Lodge No. 57 F. & A. Masons which had been organized in January, 1848,¹¹⁷ often joined with the Pattersonville Lodge to celebrate the Festival of St. John the Baptist, Washington's Birthday, and other special occasions, marching from the lodge room to the Methodist Church in the full regalia of the order.¹¹⁸

A St. Mary organization which received much publicity in the local papers was the Sons of Temperance, which was organized in Franklin in November of 1848.¹¹⁹ Other branches of the organization were formed at Pattersonville in 1849,¹²⁰ and at Centerville the following year.¹²¹ In January of 1850 a meeting of the Sons of Temperance took place at Franklin, where a procession headed by the local brass band marched to a stand on Willow Street especially prepared for the occasion and there, with appropriate ceremonies received "the magnificent banner" presented to the organization by the ladies of the parish. At that time the order had 200 members in a parish estimated to have only about four times that many qualified voters. The celebration was concluded with a ball "crowded to excess, but delightful."¹²² A few months later a division of "Younger Brothers" was formed for those too young to join the Sons of Temperance order itself.¹²³ The various branches of the order often joined each other in celebrations, sometimes chartering a boat in which to make the trip from one lodge to another.¹²⁴

In 1853 it was announced that men and women in St. Mary were taking steps toward the organization of "Good Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria," and notices of their meetings began to appear in the following year.¹²⁵

Another organization at Franklin was the Young Men's Lyceum, which was begun in 1852

to promote the cause of literature among the young men of this place, to afford rational public entertainment to the ladies

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, June 14, 28, 1849.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1850.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 30, 1848.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, August 9, 1849.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, Feb. 21, 1850.

¹²² *Ibid.*, Jan. 17, 1850.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1850.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, May 2, 1850.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, March 25, 1853; Dec. 14, 1854.

and gentlemen of this community once a week during the winter season, and to improve the members of the society in the noble art of public speaking.¹²⁶

About once a month the City Guards, known as the St. Mary Blues, held regimental reviews dressed, as the season required, in full winter or summer uniforms.¹²⁷ Honorary members, admitted to the company for twenty-five dollars per annum, were not required to muster and were exempt from military duty.¹²⁸ In 1848 a number of young men from Franklin and the nearby vicinity met to organize a volunteer infantry company to be called the Franklin Guards;¹²⁹ apparently the organization was short-lived, for only one notice of a later meeting of the group appeared in the paper.¹³⁰

With her town militia, her fraternal organizations, civic service groups and numerous stores and industries, the Franklin of 1845 to 1860 offered many and varied opportunities in the fields of both social endeavor and business.

CHAPTER V

ASPECTS OF CULTURE

Amusements

One of the popular amusements of the ante-bellum period in St. Mary was hunting. Groups such as the Pattersonville Hunting Club celebrated successful expeditions of their members with venison suppers and other similarly appropriate get-togethers.¹ Large numbers of deer frequented the coastal sea marsh, and it was reported that their increase kept pace with the toll exacted upon them by local hunters.² Sometimes during seasons of high water, the deer, driven from their native haunts by the flood tides, sought higher lands, and the planters along Bayous Boeuf and Black had only to go into their own plantation fields to shoot large numbers of them.³

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, Oct. 16, 1852.

¹²⁷ Based upon a study of the files of *ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, June 29, 1848.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, July 27, 1848.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, August 10, 1848.

¹ *Planters' Banner*, May 11, 1848.

² *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1851.

³ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1850.

Deer were not the only game found in the area, for the bays of the St. Mary coastline were visited yearly by large numbers of brant, wild geese, and other waterfowl; sizable flocks of wild ducks appeared in most parts of the parish.⁴ Hunting might be highly successful even in the close vicinity of Franklin, where snipe, woodcocks, partridge, and squirrels were reported to be found in abundance.⁵

The lakes and bayous of St. Mary were well supplied with fish⁶ and "fishing frolics" provided frequent entertainment for the local inhabitants. The shell bank at the mouth of Bayou Sale was a favorite fishing spot and one might see large numbers of buggies, wagons, and carts drawn up near it on Saturday afternoons. Here Negroes stretched long nets through the waters while other members of the party went bathing; the catch of the fishermen might include sheephead, flounders, redfish, gars, mullet, and numerous other varieties.⁷ If ladies were present on the expedition, the customary fish dinner might be followed by dancing on the lawns of nearby picnic grounds.⁸ Fishing enthusiasts of Bayou Sale and Centerville erected a large building to accommodate such parties at Salt Point, within sight of Côte Blanche Bay and near Bayou Sale.⁹

Sportsmen of St. Mary prided themselves on their horsemanship, and young gallants often trained "courtin' horses" to prance, rear, and fidget about that they might display their skill in the presence of the opposite sex.¹⁰ Horseracing must have been an interest of long standing in the parish, for as early as 1845 a race track with stands and stables had been built near Franklin and attracted crowds from large sections of the Opelousas and Attakapas regions.¹¹ In that year the racing season began four days after Christmas, with races in which entries from New Orleans as well as those from local stables competed for prizes, such as the fifty-dollar purse offered by the Jockey Club.¹² The Franklin Jockey Club was apparently quite active during the 1840's, holding regular meetings to decide the conditions

⁴ *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1845.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1851.

⁷ *Ibid.*, August 9, 1849.

⁸ *Ibid.*, May 18, 1848.

⁹ *Ibid.*, August 9, 1849.

¹⁰ Charles Dudley Warner, "The Acadian Land," in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, XXXIV (1887), 354.

¹¹ *Planters' Banner*, Dec. 6, 1845.

¹² *Ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1846.

under which their races were to operate, and advertising in the *Planters' Banner*, the *Attakapas Gazette*, and the *Delta* and the *Picayune* in New Orleans.¹³ The gambling of which the Creole traditionally was so fond¹⁴ was no doubt given ample opportunity for indulgence in connection with this sport.

Horses from St. Mary were often outstanding contenders in races in other parts of the state, and her entries had already won four of the spring races of 1848 by April of that year.¹⁵ Probably one of the better-known stables in the parish was that of Alexander Porter, who had purchased *Harkforward*, a descendant of one of the most famous English racers of that time; though a series of unfortunate accidents prevented the use of the animal on the turf, he did sire several blooded horses in the area.¹⁶

Another favorite pastime was dancing, an exercise of which many persons of Creole descent were particularly fond and one in which they often excelled.¹⁷ Public balls usually were held fortnightly, first in the Franklin Exchange and then, after the Odd Fellows Union Hall was built in 1849,¹⁸ in the section of that building set aside as a ballroom.¹⁹ Cotillion parties were also held at the United States Hotel in Pattersonville²⁰ and at Mrs. Kendall's Centerville Hotel.²¹ An admission fee of two dollars was generally required of the gentlemen attending the dance,²² perhaps to pay the local musicians who supplied the violin accompaniment to the evening's entertainment²³ and to provide for the refreshments that were an expected part of the ball. These preparations did not always find favor with the dancers, who grew tired of the gumbo, pork, beef, and fowl, often poorly prepared, that was nearly always served.²⁴

Sometimes various organizations sponsored balls, such as the benefit dances given by the Roman Catholic Church at which the ladies brought contributions to the supper table and the gentlemen

¹³ *Ibid.*, Jan. 14, 1847.

¹⁴ Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana*, 43.

¹⁵ *Planters' Banner*, April 27, 1848.

¹⁶ Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 128-129.

¹⁷ Stoddard, *Sketches, Historical and Descriptive, of Louisiana*, 321.

¹⁸ *Planters' Banner*, Nov. 15, 1849.

¹⁹ This information is based upon a study of the files of *ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, May 22, 1852.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 25, 1852.

²² There were some exceptions, but the price was usually as given in *ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1845.

²³ *Ibid.*, Nov. 4, 1847.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1850.

paid an admittance fee of three dollars.²⁵ The Kings' Balls were evidently given by a group formed especially for that purpose.²⁶ As only three or four "Kings" sponsored each ball, the membership of the club must have been drawn from the wealthier ranks of St. Mary's citizens, for a single ball often cost each of its sponsors over \$100.²⁷ One of the balls they gave in 1850 was pronounced a model one, with good order and decorum prevailing to an extent rarely seen at any ball in Franklin; the good music, well-lighted ballroom, and tasty ice creams, lemonade, and other refreshments served were accorded high praise by the dancers.²⁸ At another party given by the same organization, it was reported that the champagne was too freely distributed, for many of the Negroes, who were always *ex-officio* attendants at these dances, supplied themselves with the liquid in quantities too large to retain sobriety.²⁹

It was a frequent complaint that wherever a ball or public dinner was given "everybody's spoiled boy and pet negro" were there.³⁰ As each lady brought a female servant with her and most of the gentlemen also brought attendants, it was not surprising that "Grinning darkies and jabbering youths" crowded the ladies' drawing room, all doorways and passages, and even a portion of the ballroom itself; it was estimated that between fifty and seventy-five Negroes and boys were at every ball.³¹ The youths who frequented these affairs were declared without reverence for their elders, their efforts to obtain first place on the floor and first seats at the table often forcing the older people present to wait until the boys were finished before they could take their turns. Sweetmeats passed to the ladies were usually intercepted before they reached their anticipated recipients and gobbled down by boys whose manner of eating reminded one observer of hogs in a corncrib.³²

Balls, as a favorite means of celebrating a holiday, were given in honor of the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, Washington's Birthday, Christmas, New Year's, and practically

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Sept. 28, 1848.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Feb. 27, 1851.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Jan. 23, 1851.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, June 13, 1850.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Dec. 13, 1849.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, August 2, 1849.

every other occasion that called for recognition. Masquerade dances were held on Mardi Gras, and one year at least the maskers had to submit to a private examination before being allowed to enter the ballroom in order that "all improper characters may be excluded."³³ The St. Mary Blues, the local home guard troop, attended their Christmas dance in full uniform and waltzed and quadrilled in a hall in which decorations and sacred pictures appropriate to the season were overshadowed by a large painting of General Taylor and his horse.³⁴

In 1847 a special Christmas celebration held in Franklin was well attended by people from all parts of the parish. The little girls, dressed in white frocks trimmed with pink made especially for the occasion, joined the boys of the town to parade up Main Street bearing the symbols of the season in the form of a cross, a mounted turkey, a boar's head, the wassail bowl, and the Yule log. The procession made its way to the Methodist Church, where it was planned that the reception of St. Nicholas should take place. Once there, however, it was discovered that Sam, the sexton, and one of the lady members, concerned about the propriety of having a fiddle in the church, refused to unlock the door. The parade was forced to return to the courthouse and there hold the celebration, singing carols, visiting with St. Nicholas, and receiving presents.³⁵

Evidently some Christmas celebrations were more boisterous, for the editor of the *Planters' Banner* complained of the loud noise of guns, pistols, firecrackers, and oyster horns, and remarked bitterly that "No one whose ears were not saluted with those melodious sounds can at all comprehend the hallowed feelings which they inspired."³⁶

The people of St. Mary waited anxiously to see who should first cross their thresholds after the midnight hour denoted the beginning of a new year, for the character of that person was regarded as an indication of the future fortunes of the family. The holiday custom of kissing under the mistletoe was no longer observed, and the editor of the Franklin paper, staunch Son of Temperance that he was, in bemoaning the passing of such a pleasant tradition remembered that "wassailing" had always

³³ *Ibid.*, Feb. 14, 1852.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Dec. 23, 1847.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 30, 1847.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 28, 1848.

accompanied it, and declared that if one could not be had without the other, certainly it was best to give up both.³⁷ Evidently others did not share his opinion, for it was reported that numerous persons got intoxicated as a result of accepting a drink at each of the homes they visited, for, in keeping with the New Year tradition, practically everyone held open house on that holiday.³⁸

Two holiday celebrations in which the children played an important part were May Day and the Fourth of July. On May Day the little girls of the parish, dressed to represent Spring, Winter, Hope, Vanity, Modesty, Piety, and other similar characters, assembled in Franklin to take part in the pageant of the May Queen.³⁹ The boys of the area had their turn on the morning of the Glorious Fourth, when they met to debate on the resolution for independence, each representing a signer of the Declaration. On the afternoon of the holiday, the St. Mary Blues paraded, guns were fired, and numerous orations were delivered before the company gathered at the picnic grounds in Live Oak Grove.⁴⁰

Most holiday celebrations featured dancing of some sort, and numerous teachers of the art apparently found it profitable to offer lessons in St. Mary. Teachers from New Orleans sometimes spent their summers in Franklin,⁴¹ holding special children's classes and offering to teach private lessons in the rural sections.⁴² Often these dancing professors gave balls at which the attainments of their pupils were exhibited to the public. Professor Burns' weekly balls proved so popular that he was forced to repeat one in which a series of dances representative of various countries were performed in appropriate costumes.⁴³ Polkas, mazurkas, and waltzes were taught,⁴⁴ and some rejoiced to see the introduction of these livelier dances in place of the more old-fashioned quadrilles,⁴⁵ though the newspaper jokingly noted "the absurdity of a *man* dancing the polka, . . . it appeared as if the individual had a hole in his pocket, and was vainly endeavoring to shake a shilling down the leg of his trousers."⁴⁶

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Dec. 30, 1847.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 6, 1848.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, April 27, 1848.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, July 1, 1847.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, June 3, 1847.

⁴² *Ibid.*, June 10, 1847.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, April 14, 1853.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, June 10, 1847.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, March 24, 1853.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 7, 1848.

Local musicians offered lessons on the violin,⁴⁷ piano,⁴⁸ guitar,⁴⁹ and harp,⁵⁰ and their pupils probably spent many hours practicing *Louisiana Girls*, *Come to me Where Luna Dwells*, *Go Thou False One*, or some other popular piece of the day.⁵¹ At one time a brass band was organized in Franklin and their later successful concerts probably compensated for the discordant noises of their early days, when one critic had called the organization a "licensed charivari."⁵²

Political barbecues were frequently given, sometimes without party distinctions,⁵³ but more often with one party supplying the numerous speakers and acting as sponsor for the banquet and the ball which customarily ended the meeting.⁵⁴ Often a series of barbecues given at the various towns and hamlets in the parish served to allow political candidates to expound their views throughout the area. In 1848, a number of Rough and Ready Clubs working to raise support for Taylor's candidacy for the presidency, sprang up in St. Mary and sponsored at least one barbecue a week at Jeanerette, Centerville, Pattersonville, and other locations in the vicinity.⁵⁵ Occasionally minor altercations arose between persons of different political convictions, but as a whole the affairs were conducted without mishap.⁵⁶ At one barbecue to which the party acting as host had invited its political opposition it was promised that "no harsh denunciating language will be used."⁵⁷

Local entertainment was often supplemented by that provided by visiting lecturers, circuses, and dramatic troupes. Exhibitions featuring the performance of "occult feats of Deceptive Transformation" by "East Indian" jugglers,⁵⁸ "moving automatons,"⁵⁹ Lord Byron the learned pig,⁶⁰ and "Ethiopian Songs" performed in character with banjo and violin⁶¹ all proved popular with St. Mary audiences. Circus performances were frequently given at

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Jan. 6, 1848.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, March 13, 1852.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, 1849.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, July 9, 1846.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, May 18, 1854.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, 1849.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1852.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Oct. 21, 1852.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, July 27-Oct. 12, 1848.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Oct. 19, 1848.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Oct. 21, 1847.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Nov. 16, 1848.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 30, 1847.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Oct. 7, 1847.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Pattersonville and Centerville, as well as Franklin, and drew crowds estimated, probably with undue generosity, at figures as high as 1000.⁶²

Large crowds gathered to see Mr. Carr's performance, one which should have proved interesting if he were able to live up to the incredible announcement that "he eats hot coals of fire, using lead for sauce, and hot ashes instead of pepper, swallows a sword, devours fifteen or twenty pounds of nails, a pint of fishhooks, a handful of . . . brickbats, and waste pieces of old iron."⁶³ W. Ferguson Ramsey's program of music on four different kinds of bagpipes also was well attended. Apparently it was the unusual that was most popular, for the two "musical soirees" of an English ballad entertainment recently from London found but few in their audience.⁶⁴

During the summer of 1850, a troupe of actors stayed in Franklin and gave several performances weekly,⁶⁵ entertaining with music, dancing, and a variety of plays ranging from Kotzebue's tragedy of *Pizarro, or the Conquest of Peru*⁶⁶ to a comedy entitled *Nature and Philosophy*.⁶⁷ Local amateurs sometimes took part in these performances, and enough interest was aroused to warrant the formation of a Histrionic Association at Franklin.⁶⁸ The editor of the *Planters' Banner* noted that the local taste seemed to prefer light comedies, which were always well attended, and he rejoiced to see the heavy dramas and tragedies abandoned.⁶⁹

Many of St. Mary's citizens probably missed these summer theatricals, for that season of the year was a favorite one for vacation trips. Though a large number of the families of the parish left to enjoy what a local patriot termed "the doubtful pleasures of a sojourn in the north during the summer months,"⁷⁰ and others perhaps visited some of the more popular watering places, such as White Sulphur Springs, Virginia,⁷¹ many groups went to a nearby resort—Last Island. Boats made regular trips to the island every

⁶² *Ibid.*, Feb. 7, 1850.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Feb. 22, 1849.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Nov. 22, 29, 1851.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, June 27, 1850.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1850.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, July 18, 1850.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1850.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, August 22, 1850.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, May 12, 1850.

⁷¹ In the present state of West Virginia; Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 101.

Saturday morning and often remained there six days, providing accommodations for as many as eighty persons on each trip.⁷² The excursion trip on the *Grey Eagle* cost lone gentlemen twenty dollars,⁷³ a gentleman and his lady forty dollars, and single ladies nothing.⁷⁴ On most of these expeditions the passengers brought their own provisions, bedding, and camp equipment.⁷⁵

There were two hotels on the island, at least one of which could accommodate up to 100 guests.⁷⁶ Opportunities for amusement were evidently plentiful, for the seabeach of the island offered a stretch of land pronounced "most interesting and captivating . . . for morning or evening rides" on horseback. Boat racing in the bay was another favorite sport.⁷⁷ One of the boardinghouses on the island had a well-stocked bar, billiard tables, and a bowling saloon to provide for its guests' relaxation.⁷⁸ A visitor to Last Island wrote of the fine sea foods available at the resort, the bathing and fishing facilities offered, and the summer homes being erected by two Franklin citizens; the only thing on the island that he found disagreeable was the mosquito.⁷⁹

Religion and Education

In 1860 the census listed eight churches in St. Mary Parish, together having accommodations for about 1,400 Catholics and 1,300 Protestants, and owning property valued at \$49,200. Of these churches four were Roman Catholic; two were Methodist; one Baptist; and one Episcopalian.⁸⁰ Though the churches could accommodate a large percentage of the 3,508 white inhabitants in the parish at one time,⁸¹ attendance at religious services was evidently not as good as one might expect. A correspondent to the local newspaper complained that grogshops were more crowded on Sundays than the houses of worship, and added, no doubt with exaggeration for the sake of emphasis, that the ministers were starving while the saloonkeepers grew fat and wealthy.⁸²

⁷² *Planters' Banner*, June 20, 1850.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, July 5, 1849.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, August 17, 1848.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, June 9, 1853.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1850.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, May 8, 1852.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, July 25, 1850.

⁸⁰ *Statistics of the United States, (Including Mortality, Property, etc.) in 1860, Compiled from the Original Returns and Being the Final Exhibit of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, 1866), 401-403. Hereafter cited: *Statistics of the Eighth Census*.

⁸¹ *Population of the United States in 1860*, 194.

⁸² *Planters' Banner*, August 2, 1849.

Even those attending the services occasionally must have found it difficult to concentrate on the sermon, for there were various disconcerting influences. The set of "smart boys" in the village amused themselves at religious meetings by kicking the seats, banging the pew doors open and shut, whispering, laughing, and leaving before the services were over.⁸³ The slaves attending church were regarded by some contemporaries as also contributing "much towards breaking up the solemnity which the sermon is calculated to inspire," their attempts to sing in church resulting in "such kind of music as reminds one of an old-fashioned corn-husking, or the blowing out at the close of sugar making."⁸⁴ Any mention of heaven, hell, death, the grave, or eternity elicited from the Negroes sighs and groans, which some members of the congregation found disturbing.⁸⁵

Perhaps a good example of some of the difficulties encountered in building a church in a predominantly rural area in this period is shown by the experiences of the Episcopal congregation. The parish was organized in 1846 by the Reverend Samuel G. Litton, who had settled in Franklin, and construction of a brick church was begun the following year.⁸⁶ Though sufficient funds had been collected to begin the building, it was necessary to make constant appeals for additional contributions and for payment of the amounts already subscribed.⁸⁷ By the end of November the sum due for work finished and the materials already used was \$878 and the total of the remaining subscription list only \$565.⁸⁸ A circular printed to aid in the collection of money for the completion of the church met with little success, and in March the work was temporarily abandoned.⁸⁹ Evidently the congregation was able to raise the sum needed, for in December of 1848 the vestry voted to procure pews and finish the church building, and by the following May the structure was so nearly completed that services could be held in it each Sunday.⁹⁰

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, March 21, 1850.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Herman C. Duncan, *The Diocese of Louisiana: Some of Its History, 1838-1888; Also, some of the History of Its Parishes and Missions, 1805-1888* (New Orleans, 1888), 74.

⁸⁷ *Planters' Banner*, Nov. 11, 1847.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Nov. 25, 1847.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, March 9, 1848.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, May 31, 1849.

After erecting their building, the members of the church sought a regular clergyman to officiate.⁹¹ Apparently this desire was gratified, for in the summer of 1854 after a period in which notices of sermons at the Episcopal Church appeared only every two or three months,⁹² the Reverend W. H. Burton announced that henceforth services would be held there every Sunday.⁹³ By 1855 there were fifty pupils enrolled in the Sunday School, and the church was prosperous enough to build a rectory, the first Episcopal one in Louisiana.⁹⁴ The pastor at Franklin preached once a month (on week days) at Jeanerette and New Iberia and also held a number of services for the colored population of the area. Three Negro congregations were organized in 1858, one at Franklin, one on the Duncan plantation, and the third on the Porter estate.⁹⁵

In contrast to the Episcopalians, the Methodists of the parish were by 1845 already so well organized as to be able to hold regular quarterly meetings for the Franklin circuit with several ministers in attendance.⁹⁶ At that time services were being held in the courthouse, but in January, 1847, the dedication of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Franklin took place.⁹⁷ Though a different minister might have preached each Sabbath, it appears that regular weekly services were conducted.⁹⁸ The officiating rector often preached in Franklin at eleven o'clock Sunday morning and at Centerville at four that afternoon.⁹⁹ The Reverend R. H. Reid not only found time to carry out those duties, but he also delivered monthly lectures on subjects connected with Jewish history which, though primarily for the young men of his congregation, were open to all interested.¹⁰⁰ The two Methodist churches in St. Mary in 1860 together provided accommodations for 800 people and owned \$18,000 worth of property.¹⁰¹ The quarterly meetings held regularly in the parish customarily began on Saturday morning and lasted until Thursday evening; these were usually reported well attended.¹⁰²

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, August 22, 1850.

⁹² Based upon a study of the files of *ibid.* for the period.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, July 13, 1854.

⁹⁴ Duncan, *The Diocese of Louisiana*, 74.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

⁹⁶ *Planters' Banner*, Nov. 15, 1845.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Jan. 14, 1847.

⁹⁸ Based upon a study of the files of *ibid.* for the period.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, March 13, 1852.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, March 30, 1854.

¹⁰¹ *Statistics of the Eighth Census*, 402.

¹⁰² *Planters' Banner*, March 30, 1854.

Though the four Roman Catholic churches in the parish were double the number of those of the Methodists, their property was valued at \$3,000 less than the possessions of the Wesley sect.¹⁰³ The Immaculate Conception Church had been established at Indian Bend, later called Charenton, in 1843, and St. Joseph's Church at Pattersonville was built three years later.¹⁰⁴ By 1852 a church was being erected in Franklin and the pews were sold at a fair held to raise funds to finish it.¹⁰⁵ On May 29, 1853, services were held in the new church for the first time; Reverend Francois of Indian Bend officiated, and, though the building was not yet completed, it was reported that a sizable congregation was in attendance. By June 23 of that year an organ had been installed, and Mr. Grimmer of Franklin was acting as organist.¹⁰⁶

The Baptists were evidently the smallest organized religious group in the parish, for in 1860 their one church could accommodate only 200 persons and their property was worth only \$1,200.¹⁰⁷ Probably the largest gain in membership came in 1854, when a Baptist revival was held in the parish. For two weeks in May, frequent religious services were held in Pattersonville, where it was estimated that some seventy or eighty persons joined the church. This effort proved quite strenuous for the minister, who had just concluded a series of similar revival meetings in Franklin the week before.¹⁰⁸ Though only one notice of the regular Sunday morning sermon in the Baptist church was noted in the Franklin newspaper for the period,¹⁰⁹ it seems logical to assume that services were held with some regularity.

Religious groups sometimes sponsored educational organizations, such as the boarding and day school attached to the Roman Catholic church in Franklin which was opened in 1853 under Reverend Paul Guerard, the parish priest.¹¹⁰ Perhaps most of the pupils were still attending public schools in that year, however, for of the 174 persons in school in 1850 only fifteen were enrolled in private academies. These 174 scholars represented but a small percentage of the 1,210 white inhabitants of St. Mary

¹⁰³ *Statistics of the Eighth Census*, 403.

¹⁰⁴ Louisiana Historical Records Survey Project, *Guide to Vital Statistics, Records of Church Archives in Louisiana, II: Roman Catholic Churches* (New Orleans, 1942), 29.

¹⁰⁵ *Planters' Banner*, Dec. 11, 1852.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, June 23, 1853.

¹⁰⁷ *Statistics of the Eighth Census*, 401.

¹⁰⁸ *Planters' Banner*, May 11, 1854.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, May 18, 1854.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Jan. 13, 1853.

between the ages of five and twenty, but the literacy rate was quite high, for of the total white population of 3,423, only 254 citizens over twenty could neither read nor write. Ninety-eight pupils attended the four public schools of the parish—there was one teacher for each school—and these schools received \$9,545 a year, the total educational income reported for the parish.¹¹¹

Two years before the Seventh Census was taken, the Police Jury had divided St. Mary into seventeen school districts,¹¹² and designated the Reverend R. M. Sawyer as Parish School Superintendent.¹¹³ About fourteen schools had been opened in 1848. The whole school fund was based on a rate of ten dollars a year for each scholar; allowing forty students to the district, this gave a teacher only \$400 annually, which critics of the plan considered not more than half enough to attract a good schoolmaster.¹¹⁴ Apparently they were correct about the difficulties to be encountered in securing instructors, for though the Franklin school was under the direction of a graduate of the University of Virginia and planned to employ a French teacher also, the small rural schools frequently advertised for schoolmasters.¹¹⁵ The school at Franklin was probably the largest, located as it was in the most populous district; in 1849 it was proposed that a school building twenty-five by forty-one feet be constructed. The single-story structure was to have two eight-foot galleries running its entire length, ten windows, and two doors.¹¹⁶

Though the Grand Jury seemed to regard the public educational system as wholly satisfactory,¹¹⁷ this estimate was not universal among the citizenry if one may judge from the following attempt of a patron to suggest his disapproval in a humorous manner:

Fur the Planter's Banir

Mr. Editur:

Dear Sur—

Mistur Editur, i want you mity bad to gave em gosh, bekase i have a haf duzin big fat daters that i want to edikate mity bad. Dod rot em! i tell you they kin nok up koort housis

¹¹¹ *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 249.

¹¹² Police Jury Proceedings, April 16, 1848, as published in the *Planters' Banner*, May 11, 1848.

¹¹³ *Planters' Banner*, June 8, 1848.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, August 17, 1847.

¹¹⁵ Examples are found in *ibid.*, Sept. 7, 1848, and May 10, 1849.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 13, 1849.

¹¹⁷ Criminal Suits, St. Mary Parish, 1850-1871, June 4, 1851. All Court Records cited hereafter are those of St. Mary Parish.

and od fellers hols in a mity hurry, but wen it kums to edikate daters they are mity slak about it. I begin to think its tu spite me, bekause they no that my eldis dater, hu rites this and awl my other riting, is hily akkomplished. . . .

I am yours til deth.

PRUDENCE PRIM

fur dady.¹¹⁸

In 1849 the editor of the *Banner* paused to review the history of private academies in Franklin for the past six years. First Mr. and Mrs. Sawyer had begun their school and attracted a satisfactory patronage, then two other teachers, Copp and Pooley, entered the field. The public schools were opened soon after under the supervision of two young men, who, after teaching long enough to starve Pooley out, left the field, one to go to California and the other to enter a "more lucrative calling." Reverend Litton opened his school next, but was soon forced to retire because of ill health. Foster's failure followed the others, and then almost simultaneously three schools were opened in Franklin. Indeed, it seemed that the village either feasted or fasted when it came to educational fare.¹¹⁹

Mr. and Mrs. Sawyer, who operated the Franklin Institute, offered courses in orthography, reading, penmanship, elementary geography, and arithmetic for nine dollars; English grammar, geography, ancient and modern history, natural philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, rhetoric, logic, moral and intellectual philosophy, elocution, composition, and arithmetic for twelve dollars; and algebra, geometry, Latin, and Greek for sixteen dollars. French needlework with worsted and various kinds of embroidery could also be added to the curriculum. Scholars had to furnish their own rooms, but could board with the Sawyers for thirty dollars and have their washing done for six dollars.¹²⁰ Mrs. Bassett's school, besides the usual courses, offered piano lessons for five dollars a month, instruction in drawing and shading in pencil; and when the pupil was sufficiently advanced, in painting landscapes, flowers, and fruits, for two dollars.¹²¹

The Franklin Seminary, a coeducational school which opened in 1847 under the direction of Thomas Pooley, provided instruc-

¹¹⁸ *Planters' Banner*, July 12, 1851.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, June 14, 1849.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, Jan. 14, 1847.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1850.

tion in Latin, Greek, French, science, drawing and painting, besides the fundamentals of an "English Education" for twelve, fifteen, or eighteen dollars a quarter, depending on the age of the pupil.¹²² A month after the opening of the Academy, Mrs. Brown was engaged to teach music and singing to Pooley's pupils,¹²³ and some time later, three other assistants were added to the faculty; it was reported that pupils from all parts of the parish were enrolled at the school.¹²⁴

After the Christmas vacation of 1848, Pooley and his assistants reopened their school as St. Mary's Seminary, for boys only. It was to be in three divisions, the first of which was the Primary, which included elementary subjects such as arithmetic, reading, and writing, and cost twenty-four dollars per five-month session. The second or Practical Division consisted of more advanced arithmetic, geometry, English grammar, French, elocution, map-making, and some elements of general science for thirty-two dollars. The third was called the Scholastic Division and included a thorough mathematical, classical, and "*Belle Lettres* course" designed to prepare a young man to make a creditable showing in any college.¹²⁵

Pooley's school was run along liberal lines, with a system of student government in which the scholars had a constitution and bylaws, and elected their own officers. Corporal punishment had been abolished, and instead culprits spent their Saturdays at the seminary studying or engaged in other employment under the teacher's supervision.¹²⁶ Only two months after the inauguration of this school, Pooley discontinued his work in Franklin and moved to Pattersonville to conduct an academy¹²⁷ in a new \$3,000 building which had been erected to house the school.¹²⁸

Soon after Pooley's school closed, H. H. Morse opened a Classical and English Day School for boys, limiting the number who might enroll to twenty-five. Lessons in writing and bookkeeping were taught from seven to nine in the evenings so that townspeople might take advantage of the classes.¹²⁹ When Pooley returned to Franklin in December of 1849 to revive his Seminary,

¹²² *Ibid.*, April 15, 1847.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, May 6, 1847.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, April 13, 1848.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, Feb. 1, 1849.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, March 1, 1849.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, May 10, 1849.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, May 24, 1849.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, June 28, 1849.

he also adopted his plan of night classes for adults, teaching French, both the spoken and written language.¹³⁰ Sometimes teachers offered to form classes of adults and children and to give lessons in private homes rather than formally organizing schools.¹³¹

The schools customarily gave public demonstrations of the progress of their pupils. These recitations usually lasted several days, as did the one given by the Franklin High School in the summer of 1850. On Monday the pupils began the translation of their Spanish authors into French and English, writing the translation and the original text on the blackboard to show not only their linguistic accomplishments, but also to demonstrate their progress in orthography. Reading and declamation in French were featured Tuesday, and recitations in English, literary analysis, history, geography, and arithmetic were given on Wednesday.¹³²

A quite detailed account of a recitation of Madame Delahoussaye's school,¹³³ which could accommodate forty young ladies with board and lodging,¹³⁴ was written by "a Father . . . completely astounded at the display of wit, learning, and eloquence," which "far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the parents." The English examination lasted four hours on Wednesday, during which pupils read letters of friendship they had composed and performed various other literary exercises; the proud father boasted that "with history they were as familiar as if it were their matin hymn. Astronomy and several other studies they were well acquainted with, and in arithmetic their progress was remarkable." The second day was the French examination; a legal discussion written in that language by the more advanced students was thought excellent and it was said that their *belles lettres* "could bear the test of the most sarcastic critics." The third day was devoted to music and the awarding of the prizes earned during the school term.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, Dec. 27, 1849.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, Feb. 10, 1853.

¹³² *Ibid.*, August 1, 1850.

¹³³ For information about Madame Delahoussaye, see Velma Savoie, "The Life and Writings of Madame Sidonie de la Houssaye" (M. A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1936).

¹³⁴ *Planters' Banner*, Jan. 10, 1850.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, Jan. 9, 1851.

In 1851 Madame Delahoussaye enlarged her facilities and announced that

Beds, mattresses, pillows, &c will be provided by the institution; but each boarder will have to furnish three pair of sheets, one musquito-bar, and one pair of blankets. Besides the usual supply of linen, each boarder will be required to procure the uniform dress of the institution (for particulars of which apply to the superintendent); also, a bucket, six towels, and knife, silver spoon and fork. Those who do not wish the trouble of furnishing the bed-clothing above enumerated will be charged \$1 per month for their use.¹³⁶

Students evidently often sought their education in schools beyond the parish, for advertisements of the Thibodaux Female Institute, the New Orleans Female Seminary, the Bayou Chicot Academy north of Opelousas,¹³⁷ Opelousas Academy (formerly Franklin College),¹³⁸ Franklin High School and Mathematical Institute in New Orleans,¹³⁹ and Centenary College of Louisiana at Jackson¹⁴⁰ frequently appeared in the *Banner*. The alleged necessity of young ladies going to middle or northern states to complete their education led at one time, though apparently without success, to some agitation for a really good female seminary at Franklin. No concern seems to have been aroused by the fact that young men had to seek advanced education outside the state.¹⁴¹

Health

With the exception of two epidemics, St. Mary was, as a whole, quite healthy during the period from 1845 to 1860. The spring of 1849 brought an outbreak of cholera particularly virulent among the slaves. The disease was concentrated within the area along the bayou, sometimes seizing almost the entire working staff on one plantation and passing over neighboring estates entirely.¹⁴² Some of the contemporary precautionary measures suggested to combat this illness were that flannel be worn next to the skin, that the feet be kept dry, and that all excess in eating

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1851.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 23, 1851.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, April 26, 1851.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, April 10, 1852.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, April 12, 1851.

¹⁴² E. D. Fenner (ed.), *Southern Medical Reports: Consisting of General and Specific Reports, on the Topography, Meteorology, and Prevalent Diseases, in the Following States: Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, Texas* (New Orleans, 1850), 192. Hereafter cited: Fenner, *Southern Medical Reports*.

and drinking be avoided; on the list of foods prohibited were fruits and vegetables of all kinds (except well-boiled and roasted potatoes), fish, salt meat, sweetmeats, and pastry. The Negro cabins were to be thoroughly cleaned, beds and bedding to be aired for eight hours in the fresh sunshine, and all slaves required to put on clean clothing.¹⁴³ In March of 1849, it was estimated that, since December 1, 1848, there had been 500 cases of cholera in the parish, fatal to more than 100 Negroes and between twenty and thirty whites.¹⁴⁴ It was noted that not a case had been reported among the free mulattoes.¹⁴⁵ By May recent showers were said to be creating a more healthy atmosphere, and the cholera seemed to be lifting.¹⁴⁶

The other epidemic of the period was a disease believed to be yellow fever, which appeared in 1853, and so great was the apparent danger that the Police Jury created the position of Parish Health Officer. A licensed physician of the parish was selected to fill the post, and a five-man board of health was appointed to assist him in taking measures necessary to stop the spread of the disease. Vessels entering Franklin's port from areas where the fever was known to exist were required to submit to an examination.¹⁴⁷ As some difficulty arose in the enforcement of this inspection, a group of citizens met together and formed a band of thirty armed men subject to call at any time to compel observance of the regulation.¹⁴⁸ By the middle of October it was reported that twenty-one persons had died in the last week.¹⁴⁹ The epidemic apparently reached its peak in the early part of November, when it was thought necessary to organize a volunteer relief committee to see that nursing aid would be available where it was most needed.¹⁵⁰ By the end of that month, the disease had apparently spent itself, and the danger was believed over.¹⁵¹

Dysentery and "black tongue" made occasional appearances in St. Mary and three cases of smallpox were reported, a disease rare in that section, where chills and fever were the most frequent ailment.¹⁵² Another affliction in the parish was dirt-eating, which

¹⁴³ *Planters' Banner*, Jan. 5, 1849.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, March 22, 1849.

¹⁴⁵ Fenner, *Southern Medical Reports*, 192.

¹⁴⁶ *Planters' Banner*, May 10, 1849.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, August 18, 1853.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Sept. 1, 1853.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Oct. 25, 1854.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Nov. 9, 1854.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 30, 1854.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, March 22, 1849.

was said to be especially common among plantation slaves; it was said that every large estate had three or four Negroes addicted to the practice. The skin color of the victim gradually assumed an unhealthy pallor and a lack of energy characteristic of the malady manifested itself. Some physicians of the parish considered dirt-eating a symptom of scurvy condition caused by the diet of salt pork, corn bread, and molasses commonly given the slaves, and advised that fresh meats and green vegetables be added to their meals.¹⁵³

Several of the doctors living in the area belonged to the Attakapas Medical Society, which in 1854 had twenty-three members.¹⁵⁴ How many of that number were from St. Mary is not known, but the professional notices of about five physicians appeared in the Franklin paper,¹⁵⁵ and both Centerville and Pattersonville had resident doctors.¹⁵⁶ One, at least, had a medical background of some distinction, for he had served on the medical faculty of the University of Paris.¹⁵⁷

Apparently there was some connection between dentistry and the jewelry business, as most dentists in the parish practiced the two occupations. Dr. Cisana and Doctors Trousdale and McLain offered to fit a customer with artificial teeth, (with or without gums,) or a new cameo necklace, with equal facility.¹⁵⁸

Advertisements in the Franklin newspaper indicate that St. Mary had its share of quacks. Dr. Christie's galvanic belt, necklace, and bracelets, together with his magnetic fluid, were guaranteed by their manufacturer to offer a permanent cure for all nervous diseases, epileptic fits and convulsions, deafness, palpitation of the heart, and numerous other ailments, while a "valuable work" advertised that it could teach one how "To change the Sallow Face into one of *Beauty*, . . . to make Wrinkled Skin Smooth, To extend Human Life to One Hundred Years, or more; to Cure Baldness, . . . To make Brown Teeth as White as Pearls; . . . to hasten the Growth of Whiskers, Moustachios, &c., To Restore

¹⁵³ Fenner, *Southern Medical Reports*, 194-195.

¹⁵⁴ *Planters' Banner*, June 22, 1848.

¹⁵⁵ Based upon a study of the files of *ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Feb. 2, July 13, 1854.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, March 16, 1848.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1846; June 21, 1851.

and Preserve the Eyesight for Life; . . . To cure a Multitude of Dangerous Diseases. . . ."¹⁵⁹ Such quackery was evidently widespread, for an article in *DeBow's Review* stated:

There is no disease of dreaded name for which the quack cannot furnish a cure. Asthma and consumption are disarmed of their terrors; gout is now but a harmless bugbear; and if any suffer or die of cancer, it must be the fault of their own obstinacy or incredulity.¹⁶⁰

Some attention was given to sanitation. The meat at the Franklin Market House was regularly inspected and a record kept of the meat submitted under each brand.¹⁶¹ Personal cleanliness was perhaps not so carefully watched, as bathing apparently was not a favorite diversion of the citizens of St. Mary if one may judge from the following quotation from the *Banner*, though the article does at least suggest a growing interest in the practice:

Some persons shrink from bathing but when they once get used to it, it is indispensable. A medical writer says: "Let a child wash himself all over every morning for sixteen years, and he will as soon go without his breakfast as his bath."¹⁶²

Crime

Cases of assault and battery far outnumber other charges in the criminal records of St. Mary Parish for the period.¹⁶³ The majority of these cases apparently arose from more or less petty differences between the parties and usually ended with the party judged guilty serving a five-day jail sentence and paying a twenty-five-dollar fine.¹⁶⁴ Abusive language often led to violent use of a walking cane as a weapon,¹⁶⁵ and knives were frequently brandished.¹⁶⁶ Several cases of attempted assault with rawhide whips are recorded, and in some instances, a bullet stopped the attacker before he could reach his victim.¹⁶⁷

A misunderstanding during a game of cards was responsible for one affray. Thomas Sawyer struck H. Faivre with a chair

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, August 7, 1852.

¹⁶⁰ *DeBow's Review*, I (1846), 446.

¹⁶¹ *Planters' Banner*, May 18, 1853.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, July 12, 1849.

¹⁶³ Based upon a study of the Criminal Records for the period.

¹⁶⁴ *Planters' Banner*, July 13, 1854.

¹⁶⁵ Criminal Suits, 1844-1849, XIII.

¹⁶⁶ A typical case is given in Criminal Suits, IX and XXXV.

¹⁶⁷ One such case is given in Criminal Suits, 1850-1871, XXI.

and in the ensuing struggle Faivre soon shouted "Enough!" The testifying witness related how he "then took Sawyer of [f] him and as Faivre was Raising he Drew from the Same pocket that witness seen him have his hand in a Large Knife about one foot Long when opened and when he pulled it out of his pocket he opened it and advanced towards where Ths. Sawyer was and Ths. Sawyer left that place."¹⁶⁸

Quarrels over a hound puppy resulted in an attack with a gun barrel which sent a man to bed for several days,¹⁶⁹ and bets as to which was the better man led to fights in which chairs and other pieces of furniture were violently thrown about.¹⁷⁰ A disagreement which began when one man touched another with a stick ended, after a flood of contumely had passed between the two as they sat on opposite sides of the main street of Franklin with a large part of the town's population forming an interested audience, in an exchange of shots which resulted in the death of one of the parties to the affair.¹⁷¹

Several cases of mistreatment of blacks were brought before the court. Webb, a slave youth of James Buck, was found dead at Centerville after having been mortally wounded in a beating by his master.¹⁷² John De Hart was hailed before the court for branding one of his slaves three times and cutting a slit in each of his ears.¹⁷³ Jared N. Richardson was accused of beating and kicking his slaves, as well as having repeatedly thrown one young Negro against a brickkiln so violently that the boy was not expected to live; Richardson had to pay the state a fine of \$250 and the costs of the case.¹⁷⁴ In a case involving a slave's attack upon an overseer—the victim's ear was slit and he received other wounds also—a court made up of a Justice and ten slaveholders acquitted the defendant.¹⁷⁵ Another Negro, Solomon Smith, a notorious runaway, fired at and wounded a white man of the parish; this slave had been the leader of a dangerous set of runaways who had infested St. Mary. He finally was tracked down through the use of hounds, tried and found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁸ Criminal Suits, 1844-1849, XXXXI.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, XXV.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, XXVI.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, XXXIII.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 1850-1871, XXXXI.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, II.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1844-1849, L.

¹⁷⁵ *Planters' Banner*, March 23, 1854.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, August 21, 1852.

Prosecutions for the sale of spirituous liquors to slaves were frequent.¹⁷⁷ In one instance a free Negro who gave liquor to a slave was prosecuted.¹⁷⁸ The offense of selling merchandise to slaves without the master's consent was a fairly common cause of court action.¹⁷⁹ A \$400 fine and two months in the parish jail was a frequent punishment for such liquor sales.¹⁸⁰

Evidently affrays between white and free colored were infrequent, for only one such instance was noted in the records prior to 1860. Fortune Penn, a white man, had borrowed some saddlebags from Millo, a free man of color, who felt that Penn had neglected several opportunities to return them. When Penn moved toward the Negro, Millo knocked his hat sideways—apparently always an invitation to mayhem—and Penn picked up a brick and threw it at him. The two closed for the struggle and were separated by another free Negro who apparently had accompanied Millo; Penn kept the saddlebags.¹⁸¹

Cases of larceny were fairly common. Horses were stolen,¹⁸² the contents of saddlebags were pilfered,¹⁸³ pockets were robbed,¹⁸⁴ and some small sums were taken from stores.¹⁸⁵ Occasionally robbery was committed on a larger scale, as in the case of the theft of a cartload of goods valued at \$400 from the yard of M. Mayer.¹⁸⁶ A barkeeper at the Western Exchange in Franklin absconded with "a considerable amount" of the profits of his employers in his pockets.¹⁸⁷ Complaints were also made of the smuggling below the customhouse.¹⁸⁸

Two cases of mistreatment of wives were noted. In one instance, the drunken husband broke glass from the windows, tore apart several articles of furniture and beat and cursed his wife; when she fled, he pursued, loudly accusing her of trying to run away. Neighbors finally were able to rescue the unfortunate woman who previously had been forced to leave the house several times to escape his violence. During the case, witnesses testified

¹⁷⁷ An example is found in Criminal Suits, 1844-1849, LIX.

¹⁷⁸ Criminal Suits, 1850-1871, XV.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, XXX.

¹⁸⁰ *Planters' Banner*, July 13, 1854.

¹⁸¹ Criminal Suits, 1844-1849, XXXVI.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, XII.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, VIII.

¹⁸⁴ *Planters' Banner*, May 31, 1849.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Jan. 25, 1849.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 2, 1847.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, August 2, 1851.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Oct. 11, 1849.

that the husband was an honest, good man when sober, not so good a recommendation as it might at first seem, when one considers that he was said to get drunk as often as four times a week.¹⁸⁹

A case unique in the parish records of the time was that in which William Rabe sued Pamela Lester Rabe for a divorce. The two had been married in South Carolina, and in 1845 a separation had taken place after evidence deemed sufficient by the courts of that state had been presented to prove that Pamela Lester Rabe had given birth to a mulatto child and was guilty of adultery in other instances. In the case in St. Mary, tried several years later, the defendant stated through her defense that she "did in all things discharge her several duties as wife and mother with truth and fidelity" and asked that the request for a divorce be rejected, which it was.¹⁹⁰

The most frequent civil cases involved breach of contract and failure in the payment of promissory notes.¹⁹¹ Occasional suits against squatters, against the illegal seizure and sale of lands by the sheriff or other officials, and requests for separation of the property of the wife from that of her husband also appear, but the great majority of suits involved the nonpayment of debts.

A correspondent to the *Banner* considered rowdyism regrettably common in Franklin.¹⁹² Drunken brawls at local coffee-houses were not at all infrequent, and blows, bites, and scratches left the parties as bloody as "bull dogs after a drawn fight."¹⁹³ The penalty for keeping such a disorderly place of business might be five days in the parish jail, a twenty-five-dollar fine, and the forfeiture of the license.¹⁹⁴ Another form of rowdyism criticized was the practice of target shooting in the town without regard for possible damages to property or persons. Such shooting was illegal, but customarily went unpunished.¹⁹⁵ Dissatisfaction with the administration of justice on other counts was also noted, and the "false, sickly and diseased sentiment in the public mind" which called on juries and judges to spare guilt was strongly condemned.¹⁹⁶

¹⁸⁹ Criminal Suits, 1844-1849, XXXXVI.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, LII.

¹⁹¹ Original Suits, CXXIX, #3605.

¹⁹² This paragraph is based upon a sampling study of the records of the Original Suits for the period.

¹⁹³ *Planters' Banner*, April 17, 1852.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, July 13, 1854.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Jan. 17, 1850.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, June 21, 1849.

The famous Vigilance Committees of the Attakapas country which were active in the late 1850's¹⁹⁷ evidently had no large scale operations in St. Mary. But in one instance a group of about forty men in Jeanerette banded together to execute judgment upon a man who had been forced to leave another section of the state by a similar committee. He was tried and given twenty-four hours in which to leave the area. He departed eighteen hours later "threatening America in general and the inhabitants of Jeanerette in particular with the wrath of the King of Spain."¹⁹⁸

Lynch law ruled in St. Mary in at least one instance, when a Negro was hanged by a group of sailors who had been discharged from the towboat *Hecla* and left at the Franklin wharf. The victim, who was reported to have been put in jail for his own protection, though the account gives no further details, had been given the key to his cell by the sheriff and instructed not to open the door to anyone but that official. When the sheriff returned to the prison after having procured means of escape for the Negro, he found that the black had been lured from his refuge by a false report, and had been severely beaten, maimed, and finally hanged by a mob of sailors.¹⁹⁹

Though it was maintained that this mob violence was not the work of Franklin citizens, it was reported that the policing of the town was so neglectful as to permit almost nightly burglaries and other illegal acts.²⁰⁰ In May, 1851, the Police Jury provided for the appointment of regular patrols in the parish to assist the lone night watchman in performing his duties. All white males between eighteen and forty were to respond to the call of patrol captains or be subject to fine. These patrols were to arrest any Negro stragglers or any person, white or colored, disturbing the peace, particularly the peace of the slave population. Negroes who had passes from their owners and who conducted themselves politely were to be exempt from the twenty lashes administered to their more indolent brethren.²⁰¹

As early as 1847 the Grand Jury, as a result of its regular inspection of the parish jail, had called attention to the need for

¹⁹⁷ See Harry L. Griffin, "The Vigilance Committees of the Attakapas Country, or Early Louisiana Justice," in *Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association*, VIII (1914-1915), 146-159.

¹⁹⁸ Henrietta G. Rogers (ed.), "History of the Committees of Vigilance in the Attakapas Country" (M. A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1936), 324-325.

¹⁹⁹ *Planters' Banner*, April 27, 1854.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, April 26, 1851.

²⁰¹ Police Jury Proceedings, May 5, 1851, as published in *ibid.*, May 17, 1851.

improvements. On their visit that year they found four white prisoners in one cell and a Negro man and a girl in another;²⁰² though such an arrangement was pronounced only a temporary one, conditions were little better three years later, when the Jury discovered "palpable negligence in the proper surveillance [*sic*] of the prisoners" and declared the prison entirely inadequate.²⁰³ In 1854 the immediate erection of a new jail was recommended,²⁰⁴ and construction was begun the following year. The two-story building was to include four cells lined with ironwork forming meshes five inches square and having wrought-iron bars in the windows. All the cells had iron rings in the center of the floor. The rooms were to be as open as possible so as to allow for the maximum ventilation, and the whole building was to be painted white with green blinds to give as attractive an appearance as possible.²⁰⁵

Newspapers

Four newspapers were printed in St. Mary Parish during the ante-bellum period. The *Franklin Republican*, published in French and English, appeared weekly from 1832 to 1841. The *Attakapas Register*, also a weekly, was issued from January 22, 1857 to February 14, 1861, and for a time was the official journal of Franklin and St. Mary Parish. The *St. Mary Union Bell* lasted only two months in 1860.²⁰⁶

Probably the most outstanding newspaper printed in the parish during the period was the *Planters' Banner*, a weekly publication which was started in 1836 and continued until April of 1872.²⁰⁷ Wilson, the Franklin postmaster who began editing the paper in 1839, published it every Saturday as the *Planters' Banner and Louisiana Agriculturist*, until October 5, 1848, when Daniel Dennett assumed his position.²⁰⁸ Though Dennett left the paper in March of 1851 and did not resume the editorship until 1869, it was his editorial work which established its reputation, and his successors continued the policies he had established.

²⁰² *Planters' Banner*, Sept. 23, 1847.

²⁰³ Criminal Suits, 1850-1871, Jan. 22, 1850.

²⁰⁴ *Planters' Banner*, July 13, 1854.

²⁰⁵ Original Conveyances, K, Sept. 24, 1855.

²⁰⁶ Louisiana Historical Records Survey Project, *Louisiana Newspapers, 1794-1940: A Union List of Louisiana Newspaper Files Available in Offices of Publishers, Libraries, and Private Collections in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1941), 54.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, the material in this section is based upon a study of the files of the *Planters' Banner*.

The new editor was particularly interested in local conditions and felt it his duty to make the citizens of the parish aware of these conditions, be they good or bad. His strong pride in St. Mary manifested itself in numerous eulogies on her scenery, soil, climate, and agricultural advantages, as well as criticism of practices he considered detrimental to the welfare of the community.

Reports on local happenings or articles of special interest to the inhabitants of the area usually filled about one-fourth of the four-page paper. The front page usually featured a rather sentimental or melodramatic story such as *The Priest and Penitent*,²⁰⁹ *The Reconciled Father*,²¹⁰ *The Hunchback and the Harlequin*²¹¹ and *Vengeance of an Actress*.²¹²

Agricultural advice sometimes occupied a place on the first page. Under the editorship of Robert Wilson a "Louisiana Planters' Calendar," dealing with the planting and cultivation of various crops and the care of livestock, had appeared in the first issue of each month. Dennett discontinued this column, but often printed advice to farmers, urging them to raise everything they needed, to free themselves from the uncertain income provided by dependence on the one-crop system.²¹³ Recipes and household hints also appeared, such as the recommendation that one or two small perch be placed in an open cistern to eat the embryo mosquitoes: "If you do not put in the fish, you will have to strain the water."²¹⁴

The inside sheets of the *Banner*, besides the space devoted to the editorial column, featured regular quotations of the various market prices of sugar and cotton, as well as such necessary food items as flour, corn, pork, lard, and whiskey.²¹⁵ The remainder of those two pages was often filled with letters from various correspondents. These epistles, usually signed with pen names such as "Wandering Jew," "Medicus," "Decius," and "Sagittarius," dealt with subjects as varied as contributions to an indisposed Franklin minister, medical advice, sugar culture, education, and the advantages of the use of water rather than intoxi-

²⁰⁹ *Planters' Banner*, May 2, 1850.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, June 13, 1850.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, May 9, 1850.

²¹² *Ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1849.

²¹³ An example of this is found in *ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, May 3, 1849.

²¹⁵ The list in *ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1845, is typical.

cants. Besides these more general articles, letters from former citizens of Franklin who were making rather extensive trips were also printed, and correspondents sent communications from Chagres,²¹⁶ Texas,²¹⁷ California,²¹⁸ Mobile, Montgomery and Charleston.²¹⁹

National and foreign news was not neglected. During the Mexican War reports on some of the activities of the army were published, as well as more personal accounts of several of the better-known commanders.²²⁰ In 1849 articles on the Oregon Territory appeared, and plans for an Atlantic and Pacific railroad were noted.²²¹ Occasionally summaries of foreign news were printed, with a brief resumé of conditions in France, Italy, Poland, Austria, China, and India. For a period in 1850 a regular column called "Gleanings" appeared giving news from recent foreign journals.

A Poets' Corner was a regular feature of the paper, and many of the pieces which appeared were composed by local contributors. Written under the name of "G. Linnaeus Banks" was *Woo Me, and Win Me*, the third verse of which was:

Woo me, and win me—but pray keep your distance,
And sing as you like about "loving the fair,"
Or else I shall certainly call for assistance
To show you the door, where you'll get some fresh air.
Of no use, my dear sir, is your sighing and blinking,
Like some dozing owl, snugly lodged on his perch;
My heart may be won—and the right way I'm thinking,
Is to enter our names in the big book at church.²²²

Verse in more serious vein also appeared, with rather frequent sentimental laments upon the loss of a lover or the death of a friend. This interest in poetry was evidently not limited merely to contemporary works, for an article written especially for the

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, May 3, 1849.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, June 21, 1851.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, April 25, 1850.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, August 8, 1850.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, April 22, 1847.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1849.

²²² *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1851.

Banner appeared, in which the object was to show that Shakespeare was familiar with the *Georgics* of Vergil; the *Georgics* appeared in the article in Latin.²²³

After January of 1850 the last two pages of the paper were classified under headings at the top of the column such as "Amusements," "Succession Sales," "Legal Notices" (these appeared in French and English, the only part of the paper printed in both languages), "Business Cards," "Education," and "Insurance &c." At the same time a new masthead for the *Banner* appeared and the motto from Choate, "Give to the labor of America the market of America," took a place at the head of the editorial column.²²⁴

These changes in the makeup of the paper came after an increase in circulation,²²⁵ but apparently the larger income which would naturally follow such growth did not take place, for Dennett mentioned that he had an agent out trying to collect his debts and wrote:

Our compositors now cost more than \$1,000 a year, and when we add to this, paper, materials, our own time and the expense of supporting our family it is very easy to be seen that our expenses are heavy.²²⁶

The fees he had so much difficulty collecting do not seem unusually large: a year's subscription to the paper was reduced in 1849 from four dollars to three if paid in advance,²²⁷ and five dollars otherwise.²²⁸ Local merchants were granted special rates for advertising and merchants might insert their cards for six months for eight dollars, and professional notices cost ten dollars per annum. Steamboats advertised "for the season" for fifteen dollars, and political aspirants might announce their candidacy for office for ten dollars, the only group whose fee was specifically marked "payable in advance." The *Banner* retained an agent authorized to accept advertising and subscriptions in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia,²²⁹ and notices requesting patronage of the United States Hotel in Philadelphia,²³⁰ Manhattan House in New York City,²³¹ and various other northern hotels appeared in the paper.

²²³ *Ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1850.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1850.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1850.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1850.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1849.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 11, 1849.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 27, 1853.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, July 14, 1853.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, Sept. 15, 1853.

The small squares of local advertising were customarily quite unimaginative. Those of Dr. William Rabe stood out by contrast; instead of the usual small-print, matter-of-fact announcement of the arrival of a shipment of goods, Rabe often headed his ads with "Look at this!" or "Christmas is Coming!" in heavy black letters, and followed with advertisements such as the one below:

A New Advertisement
about old things!

. . . I have renewed my stock & offer facilities never surpassed in any town the size of our town.

FOR THE CURIOUS, I have for show a lot of white rats, a seven feet long snake, a lamb with two bodies and one head and some powerful microscopes.

FOR THE SICK, I have medicine enough to cure the whole Parish and some of the adjoining ones.

FOR THE LADIES, I have candy just received from New York, Stationery, Books, Fancy Goods, Perfumery, etc., and

TO ALL I offer my services, my goods of various description, my Soda Fountain, and strict attention to customers.

FOR MY OLD CUSTOMERS, I have a lot of accounts on hand to exchange for banknotes and drafts.

. . . William Rabe,²³²
Apothecary Hall.

A few weeks later another ad appeared:

I have some of that good French wine yet: is there nobody who wishes to drink good wine and—pay for it?

There have been some people at my shop to see my rates, but few have asked me for the accounts. I am always ready to show both.²³³

²³² *Ibid.*, March 30, 1848.

²³³ *Ibid.*, May 4, 1848.

No one reading the paper could long remain in doubt as to its editor's party affiliations, as his Whig sympathies were always apparent. He often spoke humorously of the Democrats in the parish, and once said: "There was an unusually large meeting of the friends of General Pierce in the parish of St. Mary, *under an umbrella*, at the corner of the Odd-Fellows' Hall, on Wednesday last. The most distinguished members of the party were in attendance."²³⁴ His firm stand on various matters occasionally involved him in printed debates with other citizens of the parish. In an editorial reply to criticism by a leading Democrat of the parish, he remarked:

It looks a little singular that he should accuse us of making an unintentional misrepresentation that, had it been intentional, would do very little credit to the wisdom or patriotism of our party or ourself, and immediately after explains that one great error consists in giving him credit for merits and powers that he does not possess. Well, for the credit of our party and ourself we will admit that he is a man of very ordinary merits, and of very common powers, physically and intellectually. The injustice of our misrepresentation did not before occur to us. We will most obsequiously ask the gentleman's pardon.²³⁵

When Daniel Dennett retired from his position with the *Planters' Banner*, he gave as his reason the requirement of a more active life to sustain his health, stating that he wished "to follow agricultural pursuits, as a more reliable means of support, and less perplexing to my feelings than the life of an editor."²³⁶

Literature

The only other native literature of the period which was published at the time was a textbook called *A New System of English Grammar*, written by Sidney S. Caldwell. He sold one half of his copyright to Thomas Sale of St. Mary for \$1000; the book, intended for use in schools and colleges, was copyrighted in April, 1858, and 1000 copies were to be printed.²³⁷

Textbooks were frequent items in the few library inventories found. David Weeks purchased about ten dollars' worth of books

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1852.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, August 16, 1849.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, Feb. 27, 1851.

²³⁷ Original Conveyances, N, Nov. 25, 1858.

from New Orleans, including Walker's *Dictionary*, Grimshaw's *United States*, Goldsmith's *Natural History*, six copies of Webster's spelling books, a prayer book, an arithmetic text, a copy of Worcester's geography, and one of his ancient atlas.²³⁸ The estate of John P. Conrade listed "A select and extensive library of law books & Standard Literary works," including full sets of the Supreme Court Reports, copies of *Niles' Register* beginning with the first volume of that publication, and "all Textbooks now in use in the courts of this state."²³⁹

The most extensive library inventory found was that of M. A. Frazer, who had bought of J. B. Steel of New Orleans the following works: Wyndham and Huskisson's speeches, American oratory, Burns' *Works*, Sparks' *Life of Washington*, Dallam's *Digest of the Laws of Texas*, a copy of the works of Shakespeare, a volume of the works of various British poets, Thiers' *French Revolution*, Allison's *Europe*, Guy's *Medical Jurisprudence*, *Plutarch's Lives*, Flora's dictionary, a set of Rollins' *History*, a set of Mrs. Herman's *Works*, speeches of Chatham, Burke, Erskine, and others, Cowper and Thomson's poetical works, McCulloch's *Commercial Dictionary*, McCulloch's *Gazetteer*, Mills' logic, *The Spectator*, a book on the lives of literary men, and works on the poetry of Milton, Keats, Young and others.²⁴⁰

Booksellers in New Orleans consistently advertised their wares in the *Banner*, and subscriptions to *Holden's Dollar Magazine*, the *Family Magazine*, the *Southern Quarterly Review*, and several English publications were solicited in the same columns. A bookstore was opened in Franklin in 1847 by William Rabe, whose Franklin Literary Emporium advertised medical and surgical works with plates, collections of British essayists, Byron's poems, Brand's encyclopedia, Thomas Moore's works, a biography of General Taylor, the Waverly novels and various other publications.²⁴¹ Sometimes agents of various publishing houses came through the area, and in 1853 R. A. Skinner displayed at Gordy's Hotel such works as Goodrich's *Pictorial History of America*, Parley's *Panorama*, *The Volume of the World*, *Biblical Defense of Slavery*, and *Bright's Family Practice*.²⁴² Another book ad-

²³⁸ David Weeks and Family Papers, April 18, 1851.

²³⁹ *Planters' Banner*, May 10, 1849.

²⁴⁰ Original Suits, CXXXII, #3680.

²⁴¹ *Planters' Banner*, Jan. 14, Feb. 18, 1847.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, Sept. 22, 1853.

vertised was J. Thornton Randolph's *The Cabin and Parlor, or Slaves and Masters*, written to refute that "deceptive and irreligious publication," *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.²⁴³

While the parish had its share of ignorance, disease, crime, violence, and other darker phases of life, much of a commendable nature was to be found. Varied and well attended amusements bespoke a healthy and zestful social climate. Church attendance and support indicated a distinct religious interest. Public education left much to be desired, but interest in improvements was repeatedly manifested, and private endeavor did much toward meeting the deficiency caused by the inadequacy of public schools. St. Mary residents had regrettably little opportunity to become acquainted with good books, but they were fortunate in having an outstanding newspaper in their midst in the 1850's. All in all the cultural life of the parish appears to have been above the average of Louisiana communities of the period and to have compared favorably with that of other Southern areas.²⁴⁴

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²⁴³ *Ibid.*, Oct. 30, 1852.

²⁴⁴ G. G. Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, 1937), and M. C. Boyd, *Alabama in the Fifties: A Social Study* (New York, 1931).

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GENERAL BANKS' RED RIVER CAMPAIGN*

By RICHARD HOBSON WILLIAMS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: ORIGIN—OBJECT—PREPARATIONS

Major-General Nathaniel P. Banks assumed command of the Department of the Gulf, with headquarters at New Orleans, Louisiana, on December 16, 1862.¹ His first object was to reduce the works at Port Hudson, Louisiana, on the Mississippi River. This was effected with the surrender of Major-General Frank Gardiner on July 8, 1863.² Major-General Henry W. Halleck, Chief-of-Staff of the United States forces,³ in a dispatch to General Banks on July 24, 1863 called his attention to Texas and Mobile,⁴ and suggested that Texas was the more important. This was the view of President Abraham Lincoln.⁵ The main reasons for the occupation of Texas were of a diplomatic rather than a military nature.⁶ Serious difficulties were threatening with France on the Mexican border. General Halleck's order to General Banks said:

If it is necessary, as urged by Mr. Seward, that the flag be restored to some one point in Texas, that can be best and most safely effected by a combined military and naval movement up the Red river to Alexandria, Natchitoches, or Shreveport, and the military occupation of northern Texas. . . . Nevertheless your choice is left unrestricted.

In the first place, by adopting the line of the Red river, you retain your connexion with your own base, and separate still more the two parts of the rebel confederacy. Moreover, you cut northern Louisiana and southern Arkansas entirely off from supplies and re-enforcements from Texas.⁷

* Master's thesis in History, Louisiana State University, 1934.

¹ *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War*, at the 2d Session 38th Congress (Washington, 1865), II, 305.

² *Ibid.*, 313.

³ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 659.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁷ *Ibid.*

General Halleck further stated that control of the Red river would open up an outlet for the sugar and cotton of northern Louisiana.⁸ Much correspondence on this subject ensued and on August 9, 1863, General Halleck wrote to General Banks: "Mexican and French complications render it exceedingly important that the movement against Texas be undertaken without delay."⁹

General Banks also realized the importance of the possession of Texas, but he did not look with favor upon the Red River route. Accordingly, in reply to General Halleck's urgent instructions, he said:

A movement upon the Sabine accomplishes these objects:

(1) It executes your order by planting the flag at a prominent and commanding position in Texas, (2) It is accomplished by water, (3) It is safely made with a comparatively small force, and without attracting the attention of the enemy until it is done, (4) It enables us to move against Galveston from the interior, destroying at the same time all the naval and transport vessels of the State between the Sabine and the Colorado, (5) To occupy Galveston island with a small force of 2,000 or 3,000 only, and to push on to Indianola or the Rio Grande, or to return to the Mississippi, as the exigencies of the service may require. If the season were different, the northern line (Alexandria) would be doubtless preferable on many grounds.¹⁰

General Banks' plan was to move against Galveston upon the land side, via Sabine Pass, and from Berwick's bay, via Vermillionville and Niblett's bluff, to Houston and Galveston. However the forces were unable to effect a landing at the Sabine and so the expedition was a failure. On September 13, 1863, General Banks reported to General Halleck:

After the failure at the Sabine, I began preparations for an overland movement from Brashear city, via Vermillionville and Niblett's bluff. . . . Impossible to move up Red at this season except by most tedious marches, on account of the low stages of the water. I have constantly borne in mind your suggestions as to a movement from Alexandria on Shreveport, but low water makes it impracticable.¹¹

Although General Halleck did not regard the Sabine as of the same importance as did General Banks, he wrote: "... Neverthe-

⁸ *Ibid.*, iv.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 361.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 364.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 365.

less as the objects of your expedition are rather political than military, and do not admit of delay you may be able to accomplish the wishes of the government by the route you have chosen sooner than by any other."¹²

During the time that General Banks was making preparations for the second attempt against Texas, he kept expressing his objections to the Red river route to General Halleck. On October 22d, he wrote:

. . . By way of Alexandria and Shreveport to Marshall . . . we have a march of from 350 to 400 miles . . . without other communication than by wagon train and through a country utterly depleted of all its material resources. . . . It is not a good policy to fight an enemy in a desert country.¹³

On October 26th, General Banks sailed from New Orleans on the Steamer McClellan for the Texas coast. His plan was to land at Brazos Santiago.¹⁴ He reported to General Halleck that a landing had been effected at that point on November 2d and that the flag of the Union had been raised.¹⁵ Brownsville was occupied on November 6th, Point Isabel on November 8th, and Fort Esperanza at Matagorda Bay on December 30th.¹⁶

On the return of General Banks to New Orleans from the operations on the coast of Texas, he again voiced his opposition to a movement up Red River. The inability of the gunboats to cooperate due to the low stage of the water and the remounting of Fort DeRussy on the lower Red River made the movement impossible in his opinion. However General Halleck again urged upon him this undertaking. General Halleck wrote as follows on January 4, 1864:

Generals Sherman and Steele agree with me in opinion that the Red river is the shortest and best line of defence for Louisiana and Arkansas, and as a base of operations against Texas. If this line can be adopted, most of the troops in Arkansas can be concentrated on it. . . .¹⁷

Much correspondence ensued on this subject between Generals Halleck, Banks, Sherman, and Steel and Admiral

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, xxi.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 366.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁶ Irwin, Richard B., "The Red River Campaign", in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 4 Vols. (New York, 1884-1888), IV, 346.

¹⁷ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, xxiv.

Porter with the result that General Steele's forces from Arkansas, a part of General Sherman's forces from Mississippi, and the Mississippi squadron of Admiral Porter were to cooperate with the forces of General Banks in the movement. With this cooperation assured, General Banks, on January 23d wrote to General Halleck:

. . . With the forces you propose, I concur in your opinion, and with Generals Sherman and Steele, "that the Red river is the shortest and best line of defense for Louisiana and Arkansas, and as a base of operations against Texas." . . . I shall be ready to move to Alexandria as soon as the rivers are up. Most probably marching by Opelousas. This will be necessary to turn the forts on Red river and open up the way for the gunboats. . . . I can concentrate on Red river all my force available for active service, except the garrisons at Matagorda and Brownsville, which will be small.¹⁸

On January 22d, at the request of General Banks, Major D. C. Houston, chief engineer of the department, prepared a memorial on operations on Red River, which was transmitted to the headquarters of the army.

It recommended as a condition indispensable to success: 1st, such complete preliminary organization as would avoid the least delay in our movements after the campaign had opened; 2d, that a line of supplies be established from the Mississippi independent of water courses; 3d, the concentration of the forces west of the Mississippi, and such other force as should be assigned to this duty from General Sherman's command, in such a manner as to compel the withdrawal of the enemy from northern Louisiana and Arkansas; 4th, such preparation and concert of action among the different corps employed as to prevent the enemy, by keeping him constantly engaged, from operating against our position or forces elsewhere; and 5th, that the entire force should be placed under the command of a single General. . . . Not one of these suggestions, so necessary in conquering the inherent difficulties of the expedition, was carried into execution, nor was it within my power to establish them.¹⁹

Following the assurance of General Banks on January 23d by General Halleck that he would have the cooperation of Generals Sherman and Steele and Admiral Porter, General Banks

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 320.

kept constantly in touch with these officers. March 1st was tentatively set as the date of the advance. General Steele thought that he would be able to move by that time with 10,000 well appointed troops.²⁰ Admiral Porter expressed to General Banks on February 26th his willingness to cooperate as soon as the water was high enough.²¹ General Banks received another communication from General Steele on February 28th in which he stated that he could not concentrate his 10,000 troops at so early a day. He also voiced opposition to the Monroe route, and expressed his belief that, if he made a demonstration via Fort Smith at the time of the advance of Generals Banks and Sherman, the enemy would retreat into Texas.²²

General Sherman made a trip to New Orleans on March 1st to confer with General Banks on the final details of the expedition.²³ As a result of this conference, General Banks was able to write to General Steele on March 3d:

. . . General Sherman will be ready to move in connexion with the proposed operations of your and my expedition against Shreveport on the 7th instant. I now have an efficient column prepared at Franklin, Louisiana, and intend to move on the 7th instant towards Alexandria, which point I expect to reach on the 17th instant, and to meet General Sherman's column at that point at that date. . . . The force which I shall march against Alexandria will be about 17,000 men, including at least 5,000 cavalry.²⁴

General Sherman wrote to General Banks on March 4th:

. . . I will send two divisions of about 10,000 men under a good commander and order him: 1st. to rendezvous at mouth of Red river, and, in connexion with Admiral Porter, (if he agree) to strike Harrisonburg a hard blow. 2d. To return to Red river and ascend it; army to reach Alexandria on 17th of March to report to you. 3d. . . . This detachment in no event to go beyond Shreveport, and that you spare them the moment you can, trying to get them back to the Mississippi in thirty days (30) from the time they actually enter Red river.²⁵

While this correspondence and these conferences were going on, other preparations for the campaign were in progress.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 376.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 381.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *New Orleans Times*, March 2, 1864.

²⁴ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 382.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Frequent announcements of the arrival of troops from the North and Texas appeared in the daily newspapers. Advertisements for army stores and provisions appeared regularly. Major General J. A. McClernand who had been ordered back to New Orleans for duty arrived February 15th. Both Generals Banks and Sherman had put in requisitions for a large amount of transportation.

Final plans called for the troops of General Banks and General Sherman and the fleet of Admiral Porter to unite at Alexandria on March 17th. The whole force was to move from Alexandria to Shreveport on conjunction and General Steele was to advance southward from Arkansas.

General Sherman issued an order from his headquarters at Vicksburg, Mississippi, on March 6th that General Hurlbut should provide 7,500 troops from his command and that General McPherson should provide 2,500 from his command, the whole under the command of Brigadier-General A. J. Smith, with thirty days rations. This force was to be ready to embark on transports on March 7th and 8th for an expedition up Red River.²⁶ On the same day General Sherman advised General A. J. Smith that he was to command the detachment. In reference to General Banks he said: "You will meet him there (Alexandria), report to him and act under his orders."²⁷ General Smith's command was composed of five regiments of infantry of the 1st division of the 16th Army Corps under Brigadier-General J. A. Mower, six regiments of infantry and one battery of light artillery from the 17th Army Corps under Brigadier-General T. Kilby Smith, and ten regiments of infantry and two batteries of light artillery of the 3d division of the 16th Army Corps which was his own division.²⁸

On March 7th Admiral Porter had assembled at the mouth of Red River, waiting for a rise, what has been called the most formidable fleet ever under a single commander.²⁹ His fleet was composed of the *Essex*, *Benton*, *Lafayette*, *Choctaw*, *Chillicothe*, *Ozark*, *Louisville*, *Carondelet*, *Eastport*, *Pittsburg*, *Mound City*, *Osage*, *Neosho*, *Ouachita*, *Fort Hindman*, *Lexington*, *Cricket*, *Gazelle*, and *Black Hawk*.³⁰

²⁶ *The War of the Rebellion*, 70 Vols. (Washington, 1880-1901), I, 34, part 2, p. 513.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 515.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 304.

²⁹ Pollard, Edward A., "The Third Year of the War", in *Southern History of the War* (New York, 1865), 247.

³⁰ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 229.

Because of important civil duties, the organization of the troops of General Banks' command assigned to the expedition was intrusted to Major-General W. B. Franklin. This force consisted of the 19th Army Corps—except General Grover's division at Madisonville, which was to join him—and one division of the 13th Corps, under General Ransom. These troops were at this time on Berwick's Bay, between Berwick City and Franklin, on Bayou Teche, directly on the line of march for Alexandria and Shreveport.³¹

As late as March 10th General Steele wrote to General Banks, saying that his objections to the route suggested by him were stronger than ever. "I will move with all my available force to Washington and from there to Shreveport. . . . My force will not be as great as you and Sherman anticipate. I shall move with about 7,000 troops of all arms, of which 3,000 will be cavalry."³²

It was General Banks' estimate that an army of from 40,000 to 42,000, with such gunboats as the Navy Department should order, would be able to advance against Alexandria and Shreveport.³³ The troops under General Franklin at Franklin were to move for the Red River on March 7th so as to meet the forces of General Sherman at Alexandria on the 17th.

The commander of the Confederate forces in the region into which General Banks was directing his expedition—the Trans-Mississippi Department—was Lieutenant-General E. Kirby Smith. He had become convinced early that the only route by which the Federal forces could penetrate the country was via the Red River valley.³⁴ In preparation for such an advance, fortifications were erected on the lower Red River; Shreveport and Camden were fortified, and works were ordered on the Sabine and upper Red rivers. Depots were established on the shortest line of communication between the Red River valley and the troops serving in Arkansas and Texas. Those commands were directed to be held ready to move with little delay, and every preparation was made in advance for accelerating a concentration.³⁵ "Shreveport was made the point of concentration, with its fortifications covering the depots, arsenals, and shops at Jefferson, Marshall, and above, it was a strategic point of vital importance."³⁶

³¹ *Ibid.*, 321.

³² *Ibid.*, 383.

³³ *Ibid.*, 321.

³⁴ Smith, E. Kirby, "The Defense of the Red", in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 4 Vols. (New York, 1884-1888), IV, 369.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 370.

Lieutenant E. Cunningham, aide-de-camp to General E. Kirby Smith, in a letter to his uncle of Lynchburg, Virginia, said that the distribution of our forces was as follows:

In Louisiana, General Taylor had two divisions of infantry and 1,500 or 2,000 cavalry in detachments; Walker's division consisting of Randal's, Waul's and Scurry's brigades was posted from Fort DeRussy down the Bayou De Glaize to Simmsport; Mouton's division consisting of Polignac's and Gray's brigades, was divided—one brigade near Alexandria and the other on its way to Alexandria from Trinity, the junction of the Ouachita, Little, and Tensas rivers. Colonel Vincent, with the 2d Louisiana cavalry and a battery, was near Opelousas watching Banks. General Liddell, with a brigade of Cavalry and several batteries, was near Monroe watching approaches from Natchez and Vicksburg. . . . In Arkansas, General Price had his infantry near Spring Hill, fifteen miles from Washington and sixty from Camden, while the cavalry under General Marmaduke held the line of the Ouachita. A brigade of Cavalry under General Cabell was between Washington and Paraclifta guarding approaches of the Arkansas line while General Maxey with two brigades of cavalry watched the lines leading through Indian Territory to North Texas.³⁷

In reply to General E. Kirby Smith's instructions relative to depots and communications, General Taylor wrote on January 31st:

The points of concentration are Alexandria, Natchitoches, and Shreveport. From Texas, the roads are from Niblett's, via Big Woods and Hineston, to Alexandria; from Jasper, via Burr's Ferry, Huddleston, and Hineston, to same point (from Burr's Ferry there is also a road via Tureau settlement to Natchitoches), from San Augustine, via Gaines' Ferry or Sabine Town and Mansfield, to either Natchitoches or Shreveport. From Arkansas, the routes are via Homer, Minden, and Campti to Natchitoches, marching from Minden to Shreveport, or via Homer, Sparta, and Winnfield to Alexandria. No defense of these routes needed except small squads to protect the depots.³⁸

Guarding the lower Red River was Fort DeRussy which was being remounted under the direction of General Taylor and which

³⁷ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 552.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 930.

was expected to hold back the ascension of the river by the fleet of Admiral Porter. General Taylor reported on March 7th that it would take ten days to complete this fort.³⁹

On March 5th, General E. Kirby Smith wrote to General Holmes, commanding in Arkansas, that General Steele was to cooperate in the movement up the Red River and that he should hold his command in readiness for concentration. General Magruder in Texas was directed to hurry forward to Alexandria the division of General Green. On March 7th General Taylor wrote to General Boggs, General Smith's Chief of Staff: "My spies report that the Red river expedition is ready to start at once;"⁴⁰

CHAPTER II

THE ADVANCE

At the conference between Generals Banks and Sherman in New Orleans on March 1st⁴¹ it had been decided that General Sherman's forces under General A. J. Smith, the fleet under Admiral Porter, and General Banks' own command under General Franklin should meet in Alexandria on March 17th. While Admiral Porter was waiting off the mouth of the Red River for a rise and for the arrival of the transports bearing General A. J. Smith's command, he sent gunboats up the Black and Ouachita rivers to destroy bridges and stores. The Confederate forces stationed at Trinity and Harrisonburg were driven out and the towns captured. Several guns were captured at these places and the works were destroyed.⁴²

The forces of General Sherman's command which were to be sent up the Red River left Vicksburg, Mississippi, on the afternoon of March 10th⁴³ and entered the mouth of Red River the same evening.⁴⁴ The gunboats and the transports proceeded to Simmsport on the Atchafalaya River instead of going up Red River. The crew of the *Benton* landed on the evening of March 13th and drove in the pickets at this point. The army landed on the morning the 14th and the Confederate forces re-

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1024.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *New Orleans Times*, March 2, 1864.

⁴² Moore, Frank, editor, *The Rebellion Record*, 12 Vols. (New York, 1867), VIII, 444. Cited hereafter as *The Rebellion Record*.

⁴³ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 2, p. 545.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 571.

treated toward Fort DeRussy on the Red River.⁴⁵ General J. G. Walker who commanded the Confederate forces in that section did not offer battle because of his inferior force.⁴⁶ General Smith marched his troops overland toward Fort DeRussy instead of reembarking on the transports. This fort, which was expected to be able to hold the Federal forces in check, should they attempt to go up Red River, was captured by assault on the afternoon of March 14th.⁴⁷ Only a slight loss was suffered by the Federal forces while the Confederates lost two hundred sixty prisoners and ten heavy guns.⁴⁸ In his report of this engagement to Honorable Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, Admiral Porter said:

... The surrender of the forts at Point De Russey is of much more importance than I at first supposed. The rebels had depended on that point to stop any advance of army or navy into this part of rebeldom. Large quantities of ammunition, best engineers, and best troops were sent there, and in two or three months more it would have been a most formidable place. As it was, it was not complete, (though the guns were in position,) and would have stood a very poor chance if attacked in force.⁴⁹

The army reembarked on the transports on March 17th and the advance guard reached Alexandria, Louisiana, on that same day. The entire force of General A. J. Smith and the fleet of Admiral Porter arrived on the morning of March 18th.⁵⁰

General E. Kirby Smith who was in command of the Confederate forces west of the Mississippi River has described his plan of defense as follows: "Occupying a central position at Shreveport, with the enemy's columns approaching from opposite directions, I proposed drawing them within striking distance, when, by concentrating on and striking them in detail, both columns might be crippled or destroyed."⁵¹

As late as March 13th, General Smith did not expect a force of any magnitude to be employed west of the Mississippi River. On that date he wrote to General Taylor: "... Doubt the enemy will employ large force in this department when every man should be employed east of the river where the result of the

⁴⁵ *The Rebellion Record*, VIII, 518.

⁴⁶ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 492.

⁴⁷ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 200.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 322.

⁴⁹ *The Rebellion Record*, VIII, 518.

⁵⁰ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 200.

⁵¹ Smith, "The Defense of the Red", *loc. cit.*, IV, 370.

campaign this summer must be decisive of our future for weal or woe."⁵² He believed that the forces which General Sherman had concentrated at Vicksburg were to be sent to Arkansas to reinforce General Steele.

General Richard Taylor, commanding in lower Louisiana, was more closely in touch with the situation from his headquarters at Alexandria than was his superior officer. He was well informed as to the plans and movements of General Banks. On the advance of Admiral Porter and General A. J. Smith, he gave orders to General Polignac to march to Alexandria with his brigade. He requested General E. Kirby Smith to order the division of General Green which was in Texas to report to him. When it became apparent that General Walker would not be able to delay the advance of the Federal forces, General Taylor ordered him to fall back to Alexandria, from which point it was necessary to remove his headquarters on the arrival of the Federals on March 18th.

The main body of General Banks' forces were to have left Franklin, Louisiana, on March 7th so as to be able to meet General A. J. Smith and Admiral Porter at Alexandria on March 17th. Severe storms delayed the departure of his column until March 13th. As a result General A. L. Lee did not reach Alexandria with his cavalry until March 19th, and the infantry under General W. B. Franklin until March 25th and 26th.⁵³ The late arrival of the forces of General Banks did not of itself delay the progress of the campaign because the water in Red River was still too low to permit the gunboats and transports to pass over the rapids a short distance above Alexandria.⁵⁴ The entire force encamped near Alexandria until March 27th. On that date it was seen that the boats would be able to cross over the rapids in a few days and the column was ordered forward to Natchitoches.⁵⁵

General Frederick Steele, who was expected to cooperate with General Banks and General A. J. Smith by advancing on Shreveport, Louisiana, from Arkansas, strongly opposed this cooperation on the grounds that the 17,000 troops of General Banks and the 10,000 of General Sherman would be more than a match for the Confederate forces. He felt further that his participation would

⁵² *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 494.

⁵³ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 321.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 322.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 322-323.

leave Arkansas and Missouri open to raids by the rebel cavalry and that the country through which his march would go was exhausted of supplies.⁵⁶ All doubt as to whether General Steele would cooperate was dispelled by orders from General Halleck⁵⁷ on March 13th and from General Grant⁵⁸ on March 15th. General Steele advised General Grant that his troops, about 10,000 strong, would be concentrated at Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and that he would move on Shreveport by way of Camden.⁵⁹

On the advance of General Banks' column from Franklin, Louisiana, General Taylor continued to fall back, waiting for a favorable opportunity to attack. The brigades of Walker, Hawes, Scurry, Randall, Mouton, and Polignac were stationed below Alexandria awaiting his approach. General Taylor refused to give battle, however, because of the superior numbers of the enemy. His retreat took him around Alexandria, which by this time had been occupied by General A. J. Smith and the fleet. There was almost constant skirmishing, however, between his scouts and those of General Banks.

The army of General Banks was not idle during the delay at Alexandria because of the low water. On March 21st a movement was organized against the 2d Louisiana Cavalry which was stationed at Henderson's Hill, about twenty-four miles up Bayou Rapides. The movement was under the command of General Mower and was composed both of General Banks' and General A. J. Smith's troops. The 2d Louisiana Cavalry was surprised at night and about two hundred seventy-five prisoners were captured, besides about one hundred fifty horses and four guns.⁶⁰ The loss of the 2d Louisiana Cavalry was a severe blow to the Confederates at this time, as this was a veteran organization and the cavalry force was already insufficient.

Among the duties assigned to General Banks other than those strictly military was the civil reorganization of the State of Louisiana. On April 1st, before the army began its advance toward Natchitoches, an election at which delegates to the constitutional convention were chosen was held in Alexandria. Three hundred votes were cast and there was no interference on the part of any officer or soldier.⁶¹

⁵⁶ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 2, pp. 546-547.

⁵⁷ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, xxxvi.

⁵⁸ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 2, p. 616.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 646.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 303.

⁶¹ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 335.

The condition of the water on the rapids above Alexandria made it necessary to establish a depot of supplies at that place. Major D. C. Houston was ordered to construct defensive works and General C. Grover with his division of about 3,000 men was left behind for its defense.⁶² Another reduction of about 3,000 men was made in the advancing column when General McPherson at Vicksburg called for the immediate return of a marine brigade under General Ellet.⁶³

The advance of General Banks' column from Alexandria began on March 28th under the immediate command of General W. B. Franklin. The order of march was: first, the cavalry under General A. L. Lee with a large supply train; second, the detachment of the 13th corps under General Ransom; and third, the 19th corps under General Franklin. The force of General A. J. Smith followed aboard the transports on April 1st and 2d when they were able to cross over the rapids.⁶⁴ General Lee reached Natchitoches on March 31st, and army and fleet on April 2d and 3d. The Confederates continued to retreat and kept up sharp skirmishing with the advance guard without offering any serious resistance.

On the arrival of the transports at Grand Ecore, the port of Natchitoches, the command of General A. J. Smith was ordered to disembark and to co-operate with General Franklin.⁶⁵ It was necessary to remain at Natchitoches for several days to replenish the supply trains from the transports and to distribute rations to the troops.⁶⁶ During this time, on April 2d, a reconnaissance was ordered toward Pleasant Hill. It was found that the main body of General Taylor's forces was at that point.⁶⁷ Scouting parties of the armies engaged in frequent skirmishes—at Natchitoches on March 31st, at Crump's Hill on April 2d, at Grand Ecore on April 3d, at Campti on April 4th, and at Natchitoches on April 5th.⁶⁸

Something of the difficulties under which General Banks had to labor in carrying forward the campaign to a successful conclusion were shown in a communication which he received

⁶² *Ibid.*, 322.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vi.

⁶⁵ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 3, p. 7.

⁶⁶ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 323.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, pp. 162-163.

from General Grant on March 26th at Grand Ecore. This communication, dated March 15th, only five or six days after General A. J. Smith had left Vicksburg, stated:

. . . I regard the success of your present move as of great importance in reducing the number of troops necessary for protecting the navigation of the Mississippi. It is also important that Shreveport should be taken as soon as possible. Send Brigadier-General A. J. Smith's command back to Memphis as soon as possible. . . . Should you find that the taking of Shreveport will occupy ten or fifteen days more time that General Sherman gave his troops to be absent from their command, you will send them back at the time specified in his note of March —, even if it leads to the abandonment of the main object of your expedition. . . .⁶⁹

On April 3d General Banks received a similar communication from General Sherman. This communication said:

The thirty days for which I loaned you the command of General A. J. Smith will expire on the tenth instant. . . . Expedite their return if they have not started, and if possible in the same boats. . . . I must have A. J. Smith's force now as soon as possible.⁷⁰

General Steele had left Little Rock, Arkansas, on March 23d so as to form the proposed junction with General Banks on Red River.⁷¹ Communications of April 5th stated that he had last been heard from near Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and that there was some uneasiness as to his safety.

Orders to advance from Grand Ecore were given in April 5th. General Franklin was directed to advance on the morning of the sixth with the army in such order as to be able to give immediate battle to the rebels who were known to be in force near Mansfield.⁷² General A. J. Smith was directed to disembark all of his command except one division under General T. Kilby Smith. He was to be ready to move forward by land on April 7th.⁷³ General T. Kilby Smith's division was to act as a guard to the fleet. Those boats which were unable to ascend the river were ordered back to Alexandria on April 6th.⁷⁴ The steamers which composed the

⁶⁹ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 384.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 385.

⁷¹ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 3, pp. 39-40.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

fleet of General T. Kilby Smith were: *Hastings, Southwester, Clara Bell, Diadem, Liberty, Ewing, Emerald, Thos. E. Tutt, Hamilton, J. H. Lacy, Sioux City, Mars, Des Moines, and Adriatic.*⁷⁵

The advance ordered for April 6th was to go by the road through Pleasant Hill and Mansfield. The order of march was: first, General Lee with the cavalry division; second, two divisions of the 13th corps under General Ransom; third, the 1st division of the 19th corps under General Emory and a brigade of colored troops under Colonel Dickie; fourth, the 16th corps under General A. J. Smith. The fleet was to advance to Loggy Bayou, opposite Springfield. From this point communications were to be established with the land forces at Sabine Crossroads.⁷⁶

The Confederates did not offer any opposition to the advance of the 6th. The cavalry of General Lee encountered the enemy about 2 o'clock on the afternoon of the 7th and were driven back with some loss, but the cavalry in turn drove the enemy through Pleasant Hill to Wilson's farm three miles beyond and thence to St. Patrick's Bayou.⁷⁷ The fighting was so sharp that General Lee requested that a brigade of infantry be sent forward to his aid. The brigade was sent forward but the firing ceased before it reached the front, and it was withdrawn.⁷⁸ General Lee was advised that the brigade would be in supporting distance by daylight the next morning.⁷⁹ General Lee, on the night of the 7th, camped about eight miles beyond Pleasant Hill with the Confederates just in his front in a strong position.⁸⁰

The transports which General T. Kilby Smith was to accompany and guard sailed from Grand Ecore on April 7th and arrived at Campti at 5 o'clock p. m. At this point a regiment under Colonel Moore was sent out to reconnoitre but returned shortly when the Confederates were not to be found. The departure from Campti on the morning of the 8th was delayed when it was necessary to lighten the load of the *Iberville*. The fleet reached Couchattee Point around 6 o'clock p. m. Here Colonel Ward and his brigade debarked and made a reconnoissance against Couchattee Chute, a point three miles above, where the Confederates were encamped.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 379.

⁷⁷ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 324.

⁷⁸ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, pp. 454-455.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, part 3, p. 72.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 455.

The Confederates retreated and Colonel Ward bivouacked at the chute that night. The fleet sailed from Couchattee Chute about nine o'clock on the morning of the 9th and reached "nine-mile point" at 5:30 o'clock p. m. The enemy kept retreating as the fleet advanced. On April 8th and 9th General T. Kilby Smith heard rumors of the battle that had been fought at Mansfield. The movement upstream continued on April 10th and Loggy Bayou was reached about two o'clock in the afternoon. General T. Kilby Smith immediately debarked his command and was making a careful reconnoissance toward Springfield when he received orders from General Banks to return immediately to Grand Ecore.⁸¹

Although reenforcements had been ordered to General Taylor from Texas and Arkansas, the tardiness of their arrival made it necessary for him to continue to fall back before the advance of General Banks from Alexandria.⁸² This situation led to strained relations and warm correspondence between General Taylor and his superior officer. General Taylor emphasized his intention to fight as soon as General Green joined him, regardless of the numbers of the enemy.⁸³

General E. Kirby Smith continued his Fabian policy either by design or by indecision. General Banks was advancing up Red River toward Shreveport and General Steele was moving southward from Arkansas toward the same point. General Steele was known to be the more aggressive of the two, and General E. Kirby Smith thought that his advance would be the more rapid, thus making it necessary to meet him first.

On March 31st General Taylor established his headquarters near Pleasant Hill. He had hopes that his promised reenforcements would arrive and that he would be able to check the advance of General Banks.⁸⁴ General Green arrived at Pleasant Hill on the night of April 1st and General Taylor made plans to attack. On April 3d he advised General Boggs, Chief-of-staff: ". . . If I receive no orders to the contrary and certain regiments of General Green's division . . . reach me tonight and tomorrow . . . I shall order General Churchill to join me in the morning and move at once on Natchitoches."⁸⁵

⁸¹ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 202-204.

⁸² *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 511.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 512-515.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 516.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 519-520.

General Taylor continued to protest the delay and on April 4th he wrote to General Boggs: "... While we are deliberating the enemy is marching. King James lost three kingdoms for a mass. We may lose three states without a battle. . . ." ⁸⁶ And on April 5th General E. Kirby Smith informed General Taylor:

Am still undecided on which column to concentrate. The whole fate of this department will be staked upon the issue when we meet the enemy. The battle must be decisive whether with Steele or Banks. Our position is good. When we fight it must be for victory. Defeat not only loses the department but releases the armies employed against us for operations east of the Mississippi. The advantage of our position must not be given up by any movement which may jeopardize the loss of the command. Will meet you at your headquarters near Mansfield early tomorrow morning. ⁸⁷

The larger part of General Green's force arrived at Mansfield on April 6th. ⁸⁸ The pickets of General Taylor were driven from before Pleasant Hill by General A. L. Lee's cavalry on April 7th and by night had reached a point seven miles beyond. In this situation General Taylor requested the views of General E. Kirby Smith as to whether he should bring on a general engagement the next morning. ⁸⁹

CHAPTER III

THE BATTLES OF SABINE CROSSROADS AND PLEASANT HILL

At daylight on the morning of April 8th Colonel Landrum reported to General A. L. Lee at the front with the brigade of infantry which General Lee had requested. General Lee immediately began to move forward with cavalry skirmishes in front and a brigade of infantry on each side of the road along which he was advancing. The supply train followed closely. ⁹⁰ General Lee was able to move very slowly because he was meeting with stubborn resistance from the Confederate forces. By eleven forty-five a. m. the advance had gone forward only five or six miles and had reached a point within five miles of Mansfield. At this time General Lee reported to General

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 522.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 525-526.

⁸⁸ Taylor, Richard, *Destruction and Reconstruction* (New York, 1879), 192.

⁸⁹ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 526.

⁹⁰ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 60.

Franklin: "The enemy have thus far disputed our progress at every favorable position. We suffered in killed and wounded, but advanced steadily. . . ." ⁹¹

About twelve o'clock General Ransom arrived at the front with a brigade of infantry. General Lee had, by this time, advanced to a point where a road crossed the one along which he was advancing, and there he found the enemy in force. This cross road reached around on General Lee's right flank, and it was along this road that the Confederates, infantry and cavalry, were formed in line of battle. General Lee got his artillery in position, put his cavalry out on the flanks, and stopped his train about one-half mile in the rear. ⁹² A short time later General Banks and his staff arrived at the front. ⁹³

General Banks found the situation at the front much more serious than he had anticipated. The whole force of General Taylor was in his front. He ordered General Franklin to hurry forward the infantry with all possible speed and, after having approved the disposition General Lee had made of his troops, ordered him to hold his ground. The disposition was as follows:

The infantry on the right of the road occupied a narrow belt of timber dividing two large plantations, and having open though broken ground in front, and in the rear cultivated fields which descended to a small creek, and thence rose to the edge of the timber one-half mile to the rear of our line. Nim's battery was posted on a hill near the road, about 200 yards to the left of the belt of timber, and was supported by the 23d Wisconsin infantry, which was on the left and behind the crest of the hill, with open fields in front. The 67th Indiana supported the battery on the right, joined by the 77th Illinois, 130th Illinois, 48th Ohio, 19th Kentucky, 96th Ohio, a section of mounted artillery, and the 83d Ohio. . . . The cavalry and mounted infantry under General Lee were posted on the flanks and rear, having Colonel Dudley's brigade on the left and Colonel Lucas' on the right, and also skirmishers deployed in front of the infantry. ⁹⁴

While General Banks' column was moving from Natchitoches,

General Taylor had ascertained that the Federal army was marching in a very unmilitary order, viz: on one road, while two parallel roads were at a convenient distance for

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 60, 324.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

prompt concentration, and the army corps, each followed by its own transportation, forming a column about twenty miles long, which precluded rapid mutual support.⁹⁵

On the night of April 7th, General Taylor ordered Generals Walker and Mouton to move with their divisions to a position three miles below Mansfield, where there was a road which crossed the one along which the Federals were advancing. General Taylor went to the front from his headquarters in Mansfield on the morning of April 8th. His forces were in position as follows:

Walker's division occupied the right of the road, facing Pleasant Hill, Buchel's and Terrell's regiments of cavalry under General Bee, on its right; Mouton's division was on the left of the road, with Major's division of cavalry on Mouton's left. Debray's regiment of cavalry was held in the road a little to the rear. Haldeman's and Daniel's batteries were on the right in position with Walker's division. Cornay's and Nattles' with Mouton's division. McMahan's battery which had been in front with the cavalry advance, relieving the Valverde, was withdrawn to the rear and held in reserve. My line was in the edge of the woods with cleared fields of about 1,000 yards in extent in front on both sides of the Pleasant Hill road.⁹⁶

General Banks ordered General Lee to advance at about four o'clock in the afternoon. General Lee protested in person to General Banks that an advance would bring on a general engagement and that he would be gloriously flogged. General Banks finally agreed that he should wait and hurried off an order for the infantry to hurry forward.⁹⁷

When General Banks did not attack, General Taylor, not having received positive orders not to attack and greatly irritated because he had had to continually fall back before General Banks, ordered General Mouton to open the attack from his position on the left. Mouton's troops charged across the open field into the woods and were met with a raking fire. His losses were heavy.⁹⁸ To sustain his right, against which Mouton advanced, it was necessary for General Banks to weaken his left. This was observed by General Taylor. He massed Walker's, Scurry's, and Waul's brigades on his own right, outflanked General Banks' left, drove

⁹⁵ Debray, X. B., "A Sketch of Debray's 26th Regiment of Texas Cavalry," in *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 14 Vols. (Richmond, Va., 1885), XIII, 157-158.

⁹⁶ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, pp. 563-564.

⁹⁷ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 61.

⁹⁸ Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, 163-164.

it back and captured four guns of Nim's battery.⁹⁹ General Banks' right also gave way shortly. Just at this time General Cameron and his division of the 13th corps arrived on the field, but he was not able to resist the force of the Confederates and fell back.

When the battle first began, General Lee sent back orders that the train should be turned around and gotten back as fast as possible. Confusion in carrying out this order resulted in the road being blocked by the wagons. When the retreat encountered this obstacle it became a perfect rout.¹⁰⁰ The troops of General Taylor pursued the panic-stricken Federals for a distance of four or five miles, when General Emory and his first division of the 19th corps were encountered. General Emory had drawn up his division on the crest of a hill. General Dwight's brigade was on the right, Colonel Benedict's brigade on the left, and McMillin's in reserve.¹⁰¹ The Confederates advanced in three columns, one coming directly up the road, one on the right, and one on the left. General Emory ordered his men to lie down and to withhold their fire until the enemy were close up. When the enemy were within 100 yards General Emory's line opened on them with such a deadly fire that the pursuit of General Banks' army was checked.¹⁰²

Both armies suffered enormous casualties, not only among the men but also among the officers. Every brigade commander of the Federal army was reported either killed wounded or captured.¹⁰³ General Taylor reported that his loss in officers was severe. The death of General Mouton, who was killed by some prisoners whom he was attempting to protect from his own men, was the most severe loss.¹⁰⁴ The Federals also lost a very large number of the wagon train.

During the night of April 8th, General Taylor returned to his headquarters at Mansfield and gave orders for the divisions of Generals Churchill and Parsons to hurry forward. These two divisions had not engaged in the battle at Sabine Crossroads on the 8th, and were fresh. They were put in motion for the front at 2:00 o'clock a. m. and General Taylor returned

⁹⁹ *The America Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1864* (New York, 1865), 53.

¹⁰⁰ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 61.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 389.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 218.

¹⁰³ *New Orleans Times*, May 4, 1864.

¹⁰⁴ Fortier, Alcée, *A History of Louisiana*, 4 Vols. (New York, 1904), IV, 47.

to the front at 3:30 o'clock a. m. When he arrived there he found that General Banks had retreated during the night. The cavalry under General Green was sent forward to locate his position.¹⁰⁵

General Banks expected that General Taylor would attack again on the morning of the 9th. There were two courses open to him—either to wait for General A. J. Smith in the position that he held or to fall back to meet him. The want of water, the weakness of the position he held, and the uncertainty of General Smith being able to reach the position he occupied by daybreak, led to the adoption of the second course. General Banks' forces retired to Pleasant Hill during the night, forming a junction with General Smith who had been ordered to halt at that point.¹⁰⁶ The following is a description of his position:

Pleasant Hill represents a plain about one mile square. . . . It has a gentle slope to the west. Surrounding it were extensive tracts of woodland. General Dwight's brigade held the right of the line, with McMillin's brigade in reserve—Shaw's brigade of the 16th upon his left and centre, and Benedict's brigade of the 19th and Lynch's brigade of the 16th on the left; Mower's division of the 16th corps in reserve.¹⁰⁷

General Green found General Banks in a strong position one mile in advance of Pleasant Hill about 11:00 o'clock on the morning of April 9th. He immediately began to reconnoitre in order to develop his strength and position. At 3:00 o'clock p. m. the plan of attack formed and the troops were put in motion. The Arkansas and Missouri divisions under Churchill and Parsons, with Etter's and Daniel's batteries, were sent to the right to outflank the enemy, reach the Jesup road and attack from the south and west. Churchill was to push Haldeman's, McNeil's, and Terrell's cavalry to his right and communicate with Walker on his left. When the enemy should be driven, the cavalry above mentioned was to push down the Jesup road twelve miles, take a cross road leading into the Natchitoches road and fall upon the enemy's line of retreat. Walker filed to the right through the woods to form a line between the Pleasant Hill and Jesup roads and was to communicate with Churchill's left. On the left of Walker, General Bee held Debray's and

¹⁰⁵ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 565.

¹⁰⁶ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 389.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Buchel's cavalry in the main road from Mansfield with orders to charge through Pleasant Hill when the attack on the right disordered the enemy. To the left of the road, Major with his own and Bagby's cavalry was to outflank the enemy's right. Polignac's division was held in reserve behind Bee.¹⁰⁸

At 5:00 o'clock p. m. General Taylor gave the order to General Churchill to open the attack upon the enemy's left, commanded by Colonels Benedict and Shaw. This part of the line put up a determined resistance but was forced to give way. Soon the entire line was engaged. The Federal line continued to fall back until it reached the reserves under General A. J. Smith. General Mower led these reserves in a charge against the Confederates and the advance was checked. The entire reserve was now ordered forward and the Confederates were in turn driven. Night put an end to the battle.¹⁰⁹

The battle of April 9th at Pleasant Hill was desperate and sanguinary, with both sides claiming the victory. Whatever advantage there was seemed to be with General Banks. He gave orders to prepare for an advance on the morning of April 10th.

No word had been received from General T. Kilby Smith and the fleet, although an effort had been made to communicate with him. This led to the conclusion that the difficulties of navigation had prevented the fleet bearing the supplies and ammunition from reaching the designated point of communication at Springfield Landing. This fact, along with the absolute lack of water, the shattered condition of the army after the battles of the two days previous, and the insistence of General Sherman that General A. J. Smith's detachment be returned to him by the first of May, caused General Banks to revoke the order to advance and to issue an order to fall back to Grand Ecore. General Banks felt that the safety of the army and the success of the expedition justified this movement.¹¹⁰ Mr. Young with a detachment of cavalry was sent to inform Admiral Porter and General T. Kilby Smith of this decision.

After the battle of the 9th at Pleasant Hill, General Taylor ordered his infantry and part of his cavalry back six miles to water. The rest of the cavalry, except Debray's regiment, was ordered to Mansfield to feed and rest. The noise of General Banks'

¹⁰⁸ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, pp. 566-567.

¹⁰⁹ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 326.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 391.

wagons during the night indicated to General Taylor that the Federals were retreating, leaving him in possession of the field on the morning of the 10th. General Bee pursued for a distance of about twenty miles and found much evidence of the disorganized condition of General Banks' army.¹¹¹

CHAPTER IV

THE RETREAT

During the night of April 9th, after the battle of Pleasant Hill, General Banks ordered General W. B. Franklin, who was in immediate command of the army, to fall back to Grand Ecore where there was a strong position and a sufficient supply of water.¹¹² At the same time he informed General Grover, who had been left at Alexandria with 2,500 men to guard the depots, to make his force available at Grand Ecore as soon as possible.¹¹³ The retreat to Grand Ecore was begun about 2:00 o'clock on the morning of April 10th and Grand Ecore was reached on the 11th.¹¹⁴ Here General Franklin formed his men in a defensive line and began the reorganization of the entire force.¹¹⁵ On April 11th General Banks again urged General Grover to hurry forward without delay.¹¹⁶ On this same date General J. A. McClernand, who was in command at Pass Cavallo, Texas, was ordered by General Banks to return to New Orleans and thence to his headquarters in the field.¹¹⁷

General T. Kilby Smith, commanding the guard for the fleet, had received verbal orders on April 10th and written orders on April 11th to return immediately to Grand Ecore. The fleet sailed at 7:00 o'clock on the morning of April 12th.¹¹⁸ General Taylor had been informed about the turning back of the fleet and on the same day sent General Green to intercept it. He came upon it at Blair's Landing about 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon and immediately opened upon it with a four gun battery.¹¹⁹ General Green had the better of the engagement until the gunboats got into position.

¹¹¹ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, pp. 568-569.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, part 3, p. 100.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, I, 53, p. 592.

¹¹⁴ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 219.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹¹⁶ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 53, p. 592.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 34, part 3, p. 128.

¹¹⁸ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 204.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

The fire of the gunboats and the death of General Green soon brought the fight to an end.¹²⁰ On April 13th the fleet was attacked from the north bank of the Red River by General Liddell. The engagement lasted for five hours. General A. J. Smith sent reinforcements to General T. Kilby Smith from Grand Ecore, but General Liddell withdrew before they arrived.¹²¹ The remainder of the trip to Grand Ecore, which point was reached at 10:00 o'clock p. m. on April 15th, was safely made except that the boats were frequently aground. General T. Kilby Smith's detachment left the transports at Grand Ecore.¹²²

With General Banks in retreat, General Taylor dispatched his cavalry in pursuit and withdrew his infantry to Mansfield for supplies. General Taylor was anxious to pursue the Federals with his entire force, but General E. Kirby Smith objected because General Steele in Arkansas was moving on Camden and would be in a position to strike at Jefferson, Marshall, or Shreveport. He contended that to transfer all his force to lower Louisiana would jeopardize the safety of the department. It was of great importance to regain the Arkansas valley and to open up the route to Missouri. These results would follow the defeat of General Steele. For these reasons, General E. Kirby Smith decided to move against General Steele instead of throwing his whole force upon the retreating Banks. The divisions of Generals Walker, Parsons, and Churchill were withdrawn from General Taylor to engage in this movement, leaving him only a very small number of infantry with which to continue the pursuit of General Banks.¹²³

While General Banks was at Grand Ecore reorganizing his forces, he was again urged to return General A. J. Smith and his detachment to Vicksburg. General Banks informed General Grant on April 13th that the withdrawal of General Smith at this time would lead to the sacrifice of the army and navy as well as the abandonment of the expedition.¹²⁴ On April 14th General Banks wrote to General Sherman:

. . . The withdrawal of Smith's force at this time will place the army at the mercy of the enemy. . . . The fleet of gunboats and transports cannot by any possibility leave

¹²⁰ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 571.

¹²¹ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 205.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 554.

¹²⁴ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 386.

the upper river, as they cannot pass the bars at Alexandria. The division of our forces at this time thus sacrifices not only the objects of the expedition, but the army and navy as well.¹²⁵

Admiral Porter added his protest of the withdrawal of General A. J. Smith to that of General Banks, in a letter to General Sherman on April 14th. He said:

You will no doubt feel much disappointed at not having A. J. Smith's division returned to you in the time expected, but you will be reconciled when I assure you that the safety of this army and my whole fleet depends upon his staying here. . . .¹²⁶

On April 16th General Smith advised General Banks that he had been ordered to return immediately with his command to Vicksburg.¹²⁷ To this communication General Banks replied:

The low stage of the water in Red river and the difficulties encountered in this campaign consequent thereon, make it impossible for me to dispense with your services as soon as I expected. The safety of the army and the navy compel me to withhold my consent to your departure, and for this reason I must request you to remain. I will assume responsibility for this course.¹²⁸

On April 17th General Grant advised General Banks that he would much rather the Red River expedition had never been begun than that it should be detained one day after May 1st. General Banks stated in his report:

These instructions, with the fact that the river was not likely to rise; the report . . . that General Steele could not cooperate with us, and that the difficulty of passing the falls at Alexandria was hourly increasing, if the passage was not even then impossible, led me to change my determination.¹²⁹

The army began its march to Alexandria on the morning of April 22d. However, it was not until April 30th that definite instructions were given to retain General A. J. Smith on Red River.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 3, p. 266.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

¹²⁷ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 385.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 329.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 171.

In reorganizing his command General Banks removed Brigadier-General C. P. Stone as chief-of-staff on April 16th,¹³¹ and on the next day appointed Brigadier-General William Dwight to that office.¹³² On April 18th General A. L. Lee was replaced as head of the cavalry division by General R. Arnold, and Colonel Dudley was replaced as commander of the 4th brigade of the cavalry division by Colonel E. J. Davis.¹³³

The force at the disposal of General Taylor was too small for him to offer any serious resistance to the withdrawal of General Banks. However, he constantly harrassed the rear and flanks of the retreating column and at every favorable position made a stand. After an attempt to impede the retreat of General Banks at Cloutierville had failed on April 23d, General Taylor decided to fall back to the trap he had set for him at Monett's Ferry. This is an elevated position on the eastern bank of Cane River. The front and right is protected by a high and abrupt bank and the left by a swamp.¹³⁴ The position was a vertiable cul-de-sac with the small end of the bag at the ferry.¹³⁵

General Bee had been placed in command at the Ferry and he had stationed General Bagby on the right, General Major on the center, and General Debray on the left. General Banks detached a division of the 19th corps under General Birge and a division of the 13th corps under General Cameron to dislodge General Bee. This was effected by crossing the Cane River two miles above and attacking General Bee's right flank while his front was charged. General Bee repelled two attacks but was forced to give way on the third. He thus opened the door of General Taylor's trap and General Banks marched out of it.¹³⁶ The army continued its march to Alexandria on the afternoon of the 24th, destroying and plundering as it went.¹³⁷ It arrived at Alexandria on the 25th and 26th, after having been gone twenty-four days, and immediately took up a defensive position.¹³⁸ It was necessary for the army to stop at Alexandria because the gunboats and transports were unable to pass over the rapids on account of the low stage of

¹³¹ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 3, p. 175.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 193.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹³⁴ Debray, "A Sketch of Debray's 26th Regiment of Texas Cavalry," *loc. cit.*, XIII, 161.

¹³⁵ Dimitry, John, "Louisiana," in *Confederate Military History: A Library of Confederate States History*, 12 Vols. (Atlanta, Ga., 1889), X, 153-154.

¹³⁶ Dorsey, Sarah A., *Recollections of Henry Watkins Allen* (New York, 1866), 265.

¹³⁷ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, pp. 580-581.

¹³⁸ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 331-332.

the water. On April 29th Colonel Joseph Bailey of the 4th Wisconsin Volunteers was ordered to construct a dam below the rapids in order to raise the water in the channel high enough for the fleet to get over.¹³⁹ Actual work commenced upon the dam on May 1st and General Banks put his whole army at the disposal of Colonel Bailey.¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile General Steele had set out from Little Rock, Arkansas, on March 24th so as to reach the Red River in time to cooperate with General Banks.¹⁴¹ The Confederate forces opposing him were in command of General Sterling Price. General Steele reached Arkadelphia on March 28th without encountering any opposition. He remained here until April 1st, on which date he again advanced toward Red River. Camden was occupied on April 15th, after General Steele had feinted a movement toward Washington. General Price evacuated Camden to cut him off and then General Steele wheeled and was able to occupy the city without opposition, four days after General Banks had returned to Grand Ecore.¹⁴²

The position of General Steele at Camden was too strong for assault but his forage trains and supply trains were constantly harrassed by Generals Price, Maxey, Fagan, and Marmaduke. A forage train was captured at Poison Springs on April 18th,¹⁴³ and on the 25th at Marks' Mill General Steele's entire train and its escort were captured.¹⁴⁴ This loss, along with the information that General Banks had failed to reach Shreveport, forced General Steele to evacuate Camden on the night of April 26th.¹⁴⁵

General Price and General E. Kirby Smith pursued General Steele and attacked him at Jenkins' Ferry on the Saline on April 30th. The battle was fought in a rainstorm. Although General Steele's forces withdrew across the Saline, the forces engaged were equal and it is impossible to say to which side the victory belonged. General Smith did not pursue because his men had nothing to eat and the rainstorm had made the Saline two or three miles wide.¹⁴⁶ After the battle of Jenkins' Ferry the infantry

¹³⁹ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 3, p. 333.

¹⁴⁰ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 333.

¹⁴¹ Irwin, Richard B., *History of the Nineteenth Army Corps* (New York, 1892), 334.

¹⁴² *Daily True Delta*, May 6, 1864.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, May 17, 1864.

¹⁴⁴ Smith, "The Defense of the Red," *loc. cit.*, IV, 373.

¹⁴⁵ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 556.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 556-557.

divisions of Generals Churchill, Parsons, and Walker were ordered to return to General Taylor in Louisiana.¹⁴⁷ The Arkansas phase of the campaign ended with this battle.

Meanwhile at Alexandria the work of constructing the dam below the rapids was going forward under the direction of Colonel Bailey. And while this work was going on General Banks' army was closely besieged within Alexandria and his outposts constantly harassed by General Taylor.¹⁴⁸ By May 7th the condition of General Banks' army was beginning to be serious and it was necessary to issue an order that "on and after this date the issue of rations to this army will be reduced one-third. . . ." On that same date General Arnold advised that the men and animals of his cavalry division were unfit for energetic action.¹⁴⁹

On May 8th, one week after the work had begun, the dam was completed.¹⁵⁰ Four gunboats, including the *Osage* and the *Hindman*, were able to get over the rapids before the terrific pressure of the water on the dam caused it to give way about 5:00 o'clock a. m. on May 9th. The work of rebuilding the dam was immediately undertaken. This work was completed by May 12th and the remainder of the gunboats were able to get below the rapids.¹⁵¹

The continued voicing by Generals Sherman, Grant, A. J. Smith, Halleck, and Admiral Porter of the incapability of General Banks finally led to the following order from General Halleck on April 27th:

Lieutenant-General Grant directs that upon receipt of this order you will return yourself immediately to New Orleans, and make preparations to carry out his previous instructions the moment your troops return to that place. The troops in the field will be left under the command of the senior officer, with instructions, if Shreveport has been taken, and junction formed with Steele, to leave General Steele with all of General Smith's troops, if necessary, to hold the line of the Red river. . . .¹⁵²

On May 2d General D. Hunter, who had been sent to look into conditions in Louisiana, wrote to General Grant: "... Best

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 482.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, part 2, pp. 493, 497.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 210.

¹⁵¹ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 333.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 168-169.

interests of the service require some competent commander be sent immediately here. General Banks has not the confidence of his army."¹⁵³ On May 7th, by direction of President Lincoln, Major-General E. R. S. Canby was assigned to the command of the Military Division of West Mississippi which included the Department of Arkansas and the Gulf.¹⁵⁴ General Canby assumed command of his Division on May 11th.¹⁵⁵

As soon as the fleet had been released at Alexandria on May 12th General Banks ordered his army to move toward Simmsport via the river road on the morning of May 13th.¹⁵⁶ This route was taken so that the army might at all times have the support of the fleet.

The departure of the Federal army from Alexandria was followed by a great fire which destroyed two-thirds of the city. Various opinions existed as to the origin of the fire, but nothing positive is known. It is not likely that the total destruction of the city was intended, but a high wind soon had the flames beyond control.

General Taylor offered what resistance he could to the army of General Banks on its retreat from Alexandria, but his force was still too weak to be effectual. The divisions of Generals Polignac, Major, and Bagby were in his front and on his flank, General Steele's division was in his rear, while General Harrison was on the north side of Red River.¹⁵⁷ This disposition of his forces was able to harrass General Banks but not to check him. A skirmish occurred at Wilson's Landing on May 14th and another at Avoyelles Prairie on May 15th.¹⁵⁸ From Avoyelles Prairie General Taylor fell back to Mansura where a line was drawn up with Generals Bagby and Major and nineteen pieces of artillery on the right and General Polignac and two regiments of cavalry under Debray with thirteen pieces of artillery on the left.¹⁵⁹

General Banks ordered General Emory to attack the Confederate position at daybreak on May 16th. General Emory was to attack on the left while General A. J. Smith was to attack

¹⁵³ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 3, p. 390.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 490.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 543-544.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 558-559.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 591.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 592-593.

on his right. General Arnold with his cavalry was in the rear right flank while General Lawler was held in reserve.¹⁶⁰ By 6:00 o'clock a. m. the action had become general. General Taylor repulsed the attacks on the right and center but the attack of General A. J. Smith on his left forced him to withdraw, thus leaving the road to Simmsport open to the retreat of General Banks.¹⁶¹ The Federal army arrived at Simmsport on the morning of May 17th.¹⁶² Here, under the supervision of Colonel Joseph Bailey, the Atchafalaya River was bridged by use of the transport vessels and the passage of the river by General Banks' army was completed on May 20th.¹⁶³ General Canby had arrived at Simmsport on May 19th and had replaced General Banks in command on May 20th.¹⁶⁴ The detachments of the 16th and 17th Army Corps under General A. J. Smith were ordered to Vicksburg, Mississippi, to await further orders.¹⁶⁵ The 13th and 19th Corps, the cavalry, and the trains continued the march, under General Emory, and on the 22d of May went into camp at Morganza on the Mississippi River. The campaign thus came to a close and "from Arkansas to the Gulf, from the Atchafalaya to the Rio Grande there was no longer a Union soldier, . . ."¹⁶⁶

CHAPTER V

INFLUENCE OF COTTON ON THE CAMPAIGN

From the beginning of the Civil War the question of finance was a grave one for the Confederacy. Her only source of revenue was from the sale of cotton, particularly to France and England. Most of this cotton found its way abroad through Mexico. It is probable that the setting up of the Mexican Empire under the protection of France was for the purpose of facilitating this exchange of goods.¹⁶⁷ It was likewise for the purpose of putting an end to this exchange that General Halleck telegraphed to General Banks on August 6, 1863:¹⁶⁸ "There are important reasons why our flag should be hoisted in some point

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, part 3, p. 604.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, part 1, pp. 592-593.

¹⁶² *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, 397-398.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 335.

¹⁶⁵ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 3, pp. 694-695.

¹⁶⁶ Irwin, *History of the Nineteenth Army Corps*, 348.

¹⁶⁷ *New Orleans Times*, November 7, 1863.

¹⁶⁸ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, iv.

of Texas with the least possible delay." Newspaper reports stated that General Banks' expedition to Texas expected to get 250,000 bales of cotton.¹⁶⁹

That the Red River expedition was undertaken to get possession of the large amount of cotton in the rich Red River valley is borne out in the instructions given to General Banks at the time he was appointed to the command of the Department of the Gulf. On November 9, 1862, General Halleck wrote that "to ascend with a naval and military force the Red River as far as it is navigable, and thus open up an outlet for the sugar and cotton of northern Louisiana" was an object worthy of General Banks' attention.¹⁷⁰

Because of the opposition of General Banks to an expedition up Red River, it was not until the spring of 1864 that the instructions of General Halleck were carried out. By that time General E. Kirby Smith knew of the plans of General Banks and, realizing that the large amount of cotton in the Red River valley would fall into the hands of the Federals, ordered the destruction of the cotton in that section belonging to the government and to private parties.¹⁷¹ General Richard Taylor protested the destroying of the private cotton. The people saw in the destruction of their cotton a mere sacrifice, useless to the cause, but ruinous to individuals.¹⁷² General Taylor was able to obtain a revocation of the order to burn the cotton of private citizens in exposed districts.¹⁷³

Something of an idea as to the general belief of what the expedition was to accomplish was shown in a newspaper report from New Orleans of March 11th, just as the expedition was advancing. The report said:

Cotton speculators here assert that the military operations now in progress will result in large shipments of cotton to New Orleans, both private and government. The speculators insist that a region will be penetrated where there is a great amount of cotton that can be obtained for a consideration. So well assured are they of this that an offer of \$2,500 was made yesterday for the privilege of leaving New Orleans as an authorized correspondent of a northern newspaper.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ *Daily True Delta*, December 2, 1863.

¹⁷⁰ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, iv.

¹⁷¹ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 2, p. 818.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 852-853.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 634.

¹⁷⁴ *New York Herald*, March 20, 1864.

Immediately after the opening of the campaign every day found articles in the New Orleans newspapers reporting the seizing of cotton by the Federals and the burning of cotton by the Confederates. A letter from Alexandria, dated April 22d, said: "Cotton is coming in in a perpetual stream and going out as rapidly. Counted between 3,000 and 4,000 bales awaiting shipment and daily receipts and shipments are considerable. The quantity burned by the rebels is enormous."¹⁷⁵

Further evidence that the obtaining of cotton was one of the prime motives of the expedition, and some indication of the amount of cotton obtained is shown below. Admiral Porter appeared before Alexandria on March 15th and the gunboats secured some 5,000 bales of cotton.¹⁷⁶ During the first week of the expedition, the gunboats rescued upward of 4,000 bales of cotton and large quantities were brought in by the Negroes.¹⁷⁷ Lieutenant-Colonel C. H. Parkhurst of the 3d Rhode Island Cavalry said:

After the army and navy reached Alexandria and moved toward Shreveport, . . . everyone felt that cotton was the great object of the expedition, as it was perfectly well known that if Shreveport was captured it could not be held except by a large force, and that it was not of sufficient importance to hold. . . . I have always felt that cotton or the desire to own other people's cotton, which has caused so much misery to the country, had much to do with the untoward results of the campaign. . . .¹⁷⁸

General D. Hunger, after a thorough study of conditions in Louisiana, on May 2d, wrote to General Grant:

The Department of the Gulf is one great mass of corruption. Cotton and politics, instead of the war, appear to have engrossed the army. The vital interests of the contest are laid aside, and we are amused with sham State governments, which are a complete laughing stock to the people, and the lives of our men are sacrificed in the interests of cotton speculators. . . .¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ *Daily True Delta*, April 28, 1864.

¹⁷⁶ "Monthly Record of Current Events," in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, XXVIII, 847 (May, 1864).

¹⁷⁷ Tenney, W. J., *The Military and Naval History of the Rebellion in the United States, with Biographical Sketches of Deceased Officers* (New York, 1866), 509.

¹⁷⁸ Parkhurst, C. H., "Incidents of Cavalry Service in Louisiana", in *Personal Narratives of the Battles of the Rebellion*, being Papers read before the Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society, No. 7, (Providence, 1879), 8, 15.

¹⁷⁹ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 3, p. 390.

An expression of the southern point of view is shown by the following:

The Yankees now penetrated the famous cotton district of the Red river; and Porter, who had already obtained in the South the unenviable title of "the Thief of the Mississippi," took the initiative in a system of pillage that might have disgraced the most ruthless and ferocious banditti. Many of the planters applied the torch to their cotton rather than it should fall into the hands of the rapacious enemy. Porter reported to his government that upwards of 4,000 bales of cotton had been confiscated and rescued by his gunboats: a boastful estimate, much above the truth. If cotton could not be found, the Yankees had no hesitation in making prizes of other property; and when disappointed of plunder, they could at least give vent to their feelings in a spirit of destruction and wanton ferocity.¹⁸⁰

General E. Kirby Smith made an emphatic denial of the charge that he was to fall back before the advance of General Banks so that the Confederate cotton might be taken to New Orleans by the Federals and sold. He said: "There is not the least foundation upon which this story could rest."¹⁸¹

The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War had before it for examination practically all of the officers of the army and navy who took part in the expedition. In regard to the influence of cotton on the expedition, the report of the joint committee said:

There is one feature of this expedition to which your committee would call attention, as it seems to have exerted an important influence upon it after it was begun, if it does not furnish one of the motives which prompted its undertaking. It seems to have been confidently expected that a large amount of valuable agricultural products, principally cotton, would be brought within our possession by a successful movement upon this route. There were many persons accompanying the expedition, generally known as speculators, and most of the witnesses testify that their presence exerted a very unfavorable influence upon the expedition. General Banks states most positively that he gave no permission to anyone to accompany the expedition for the purpose of trading in cotton or other products of the State. Admiral Porter, and other officers of the navy, deny with great positiveness

¹⁸⁰ Pollard, "The Third Year of the War", *loc. cit.*, 249.

¹⁸¹ Smith, "The Defense of the Red," *loc. cit.*, IV, 373-374.

that they gave permission to any persons to accompany the expedition for any such purpose, or that . . . they rendered assistance to those engaged in that business.

As to the means by which these "cotton speculators" obtained permission to accompany the expedition there is no satisfactory testimony, except in the case of some persons who had a permit from the President authorizing them to visit that portion of the country, and directing military and naval officers to afford them facilities.

The navy seized a great deal of cotton as naval prize, both on the Red river and the Washita, nearly if not quite all that seized on the Red river being found below Alexandria. That cotton was sent to Cairo, Illinois, for adjudication by the United States court. . . . But it seems that after the rebel authorities learned that the navy was seizing cotton below and at Alexandria, they burned large quantities of it to prevent its falling into the hands of our forces.

. . . The commercial transactions were conducted by those who ascended Red river by authority of the President's permit, as before stated, and in part by "speculators," who, without any permit or other authority, so far as is shown by the evidence of the commanding general, came up on the headquarters boat of the army, bringing with them bagging and rope for the cotton they might secure.¹⁸²

This report was signed by B. F. Wade, chairman, Z. Chandler, George W. Julian, and B. F. Loan.

A minority report, signed by D. W. Gooch, said:

It will be seen . . . that one of the advantages expected to be gained by an expedition up Red river was the opening of "an outlet for the sugar and cotton of northern Louisiana;" and also . . . he mentions, among other reasons in its favor, the following: "Moreover, it would open to us the cotton and slaves of northeastern Louisiana and southern Arkansas."

. . . The navy . . . immediately commenced seizing cotton, . . . sending four and five miles into the country and hauling it in. Admiral Porter says that he sent 3,000 bales from Alexandria, and 3,000 from Washita, and that that was about all the cotton got out of the country. A number of prominent citizens at Alexandria . . . called on Admiral Porter and told him that if he continued to seize cotton as he was then doing, the rebels would burn all private as well

¹⁸² Report of the Joint Committee, II, x, xiv-xv.

as confederate cotton; but the Admiral seemed to think otherwise, and went on with the seizures, and in a short time the rebels began to burn all cotton within their reach.

. . . This seizure of cotton by the navy, with the expectation on the part of its officers that they were to receive large sums of prize money from it, seems to have occasioned ill feeling between the officers of the army and the navy. . . .

There were a number of civilians who accompanied the expedition . . . who were believed by many of the witnesses to be cotton speculators, and were supposed to be there for the purpose of operating in cotton, but it does not appear . . . that more than two of these had any authority or permit to do so. These two men, Casey and Butler, presented to Admiral Porter and General Banks a pass or permit, . . . and signed by the President of the United States, directing military and naval authorities to grant them facilities in going where they pleased in that section of the country, and mentioning particularly Red river.

This permit General Banks and Admiral Porter felt bound to respect, and each directed the officers under them to grant the facilities required by its terms.¹⁸³

Notwithstanding the fact that the testimony of the officers of the army and the navy is contradictory, each blaming the other for the seizing of the cotton, the evidence clearly shows "that cotton destroyed the whole expedition. If there had been no cotton we could and probably would have gone to Shreveport."¹⁸⁴

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION—RESULTS

The turning point in the campaign for the possession of the Red River valley which General N. P. Banks undertook in the spring of 1864 was the battle of Sabine Crossroads or Mansfield on April 8th. In this battle the Confederate forces under General Richard Taylor were able to defeat the Union forces, meeting the cavalry division, the 13th corps, and the 19th corps in detail. He defeated General A. L. Lee and General Cameron and pursued them until nightfall when he was checked by General Emory. After this battle General Banks fell back to

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, xlv-xlvii.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, xi.

Pleasant Hill where he had the better of an engagement on April 9th. The retreat to Grand Ecore following this engagement was for the purpose of reorganizing before making another advance, but another advance was never made.

The failure of General Banks to reach his objective and the unfavorable reports emanating from Louisiana led, on May 11th, a few days before the fleet was released at Alexandria, to the introduction of a resolution in the United States Senate by Mr. Lane of Kansas: "Resolved, That the joint committee on the conduct of the war be instructed to investigate the causes of the recent disasters on Red River, with powers to send for persons and papers."¹⁸⁵ Mr. Grimes of Iowa amended the resolution to read:

Resolved by the Senate (The House of Representatives concurring), That the joint committee on the conduct of the war be requested to investigate the causes of the recent disasters on Red river, and inquire into the general administration of that department, with powers to send for persons and papers.

The resolution was adopted in its amended form.

The investigation clearly showed that General Banks at no time considered the movement practicable,¹⁸⁶ but had undertaken it on the instructions of General Halleck, General-in-Chief. The minority report said:

... the general-in-chief, who first proposed the expedition and repeatedly urged its undertaking, with full knowledge of all the facts and circumstances relating to it, who directed the cooperation of the three separate armies and secured the assistance of the navy for its accomplishment, was the responsible author.¹⁸⁷

General Grant also absolved General Banks of any responsibility for the campaign. He wrote: "It is but just to Banks, however, to say that his expedition was ordered from Washington, and he was in no way responsible except for the conduct of it. . . . He opposed the expedition."¹⁸⁸

In General Banks' testimony he stated:

... The success of the expedition depended solely upon celerity of movement. The navy was detained by low water at

¹⁸⁵ *The Congressional Globe* (Washington, 1864), 2218-2221.

¹⁸⁶ *Report of the Joint Committee*, II, ix.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, xxxiii.

¹⁸⁸ Grant, Ulysses S., "Preparing for the Campaigns of '64", in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, IV, 108.

Alexandria sixteen days, and at Grand Ecore three days. It occupied four days in moving from Grand Ecore to Springfield Landing, a distance of one hundred and four miles, upon what the despatches describe as "a rising river" with "good water," where it arrived two days after the first battle, and one day after the decisive battle of the campaign at Pleasant Hill. It detained the army ten days at Grand Ecore and eighteen days at Alexandria on its return. These are not opinions; they are facts. To the army they were pregnant and bloody events.

The difficulties of navigation, the imperfect concentration of forces, the incautious march of the 8th of April, and the limited time allotted to the expedition, were the causes of its failure. . . .¹⁸⁹

This view as to the failure of the campaign to accomplish its purpose was concurred in by practically all of the officers of General Banks' staff.

General Banks reported that his total loss was 3,980 men. Of this number 289 were killed, 1,541 were wounded, and 2,150 were missing. The loss in artillery was confined to Nims' battery and a section of the Missouri howitzer battery. In the confusion of the cavalry train during the battle of Sabine Crossroads on April 8th, 150 wagons and 800 mules were captured by the Confederate forces.¹⁹⁰

Probably the most important result in connection with the campaign is to be found in the effect that it had upon General Grant's plan of operations east of the Mississippi River.

On the 27th of March, before setting out from Alexandria, General Banks received . . . the orders of Lieutenant-General Grant . . . on taking command of the armies of the United States. For the first time during the war, all the armies were to move as one, with a single purpose, ruled by a single will; along the whole line, from the Mississippi to the Atlantic, a combined movement was to take place early in May, and in this the entire effective force of the Department of the Gulf was to take part. General A. J. Smith was to join the army of Tennessee for the Atlantic campaign, and General Banks was to go against Mobile. General Sherman had lent General A. J. Smith to General Banks for thirty days. This limit General Grant was willing to extend by ten or fifteen days, but if Shreveport were not to be taken by that time—that is, by the 25th of April at the very latest—then General Banks was to send General A. J. Smith's detachment

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 340.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, xlv.

back to Vicksburg in season to arrive there at the date originally named—that is by the 10th of April,—even if this lead to the abandonment of the expedition.¹⁹¹

However, the forces engaged in the expedition up the Red River were not released until May 22d and then it was too late for them to have any active part in General Grant's eastern offensive. Honorable E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War, regretted the failure and the heavy loss of men and material, but he was able to write to President Lincoln: "Although . . . the enemy occupied the attention of a large force designed and that might have been employed in other fields, he was himself kept in check and hindered from taking part in the great campaign east of the Mississippi."¹⁹²

A very unfortunate situation arose during the course of the campaign which had a great deal to do with the effectiveness of the force employed.

On both sides this unhappy campaign of the Red river raised a great and bitter crop of quarrels. . . . Banks was overslaughed, and quitted the department in disgust. Stone was replaced by Dwight as chief-of-staff, and Lee as chief-of-cavalry by Arnold; A. J. Smith departed more in anger than in sorrow; while between the Admiral and the general commanding, recriminations were exchanged in language well up to the limits of "parliamentary" privilege.¹⁹³

Further evidence as to the disorganized condition of the army is shown by the following statement:

. . . there was a great conflict of authority, a kind of go-as-you-please. The four different army corps were al-days at a discord, a great deal of jealousy existing amongst the officers and men. When the 19th Corps were not quarreling the 13th were. The 16th and 17th Corps, composed of Western troops, were claiming superiority to the Eastern troops; the regular organized cavalry were continually finding fault with the mounted infantry; and the navy, from the Admiral to the cabin boy, were always on a rampage.¹⁹⁴

The plan of campaign pursued by General E. Kirby Smith, the commander-in-chief of the Confederate forces in Louisiana, following the retreat of General Banks after the battles of April 8th and 9th at Sabine Crossroads and Pleasant Hill, gave rise to a very bitter controversy between himself and General Richard

¹⁹¹ Irwin, *History of the Nineteenth Army Corps*, 293-294.

¹⁹² *The War of the Rebellion*, III, 5, p. 498.

¹⁹³ Irwin, *History of the Nineteenth Army Corps*, 361.

¹⁹⁴ Flinn, Frank M., *Campaigning with Banks in Louisiana, '63 and '64, and with Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley in '64 and '65* (Lynn, Massachusetts, 1887), 156-157.

Taylor. General Taylor felt that with the army of General Banks demoralized and with the low condition of the water in the Red River he would be able to capture the whole Federal force, including the fleet. He argued that this movement was the more important and protested against the withdrawal of the divisions of Walker, Churchill, and Parsons to go against General Steele in Arkansas.¹⁹⁵

Accurate evidence of the feeling of General Taylor toward this plan is found in his book, *Destruction and Reconstruction*:

In all the ages since the establishment of the Assyrian monarchy no commander has possessed equal power to destroy a cause. Far away from the great centers of the conflict in Virginia and Georgia, a blow decisive of the war was afforded. An army that included the strength of every garrison from Memphis to the Gulf had been routed, and, by the incompetency of its commander, was utterly demoralized and ripe for destruction. But this army was permitted to escape, and its 19th corps reached Chesapeake Bay in time to save Washington from General Early's attack, while the 13th, 16th, and 17th corps reenforced Sherman in Georgia. More than all, we lost Porter's fleet, which the falling river had delivered into our hands; for the protection of an army was necessary to its liberation, as without the army a dam at the falls could not have been constructed. With this fleet, or even a portion of it, we could have at once recovered possession of the Mississippi, from the Ohio to the sea, and undone all the work of the Federals since the winter of 1861. Instead of Sherman, Johnston would have been reenforced from west of the Mississippi, and thousands of absent men, with fresh hope, would have joined Lee. The Southern people might have been spared the humiliation of defeat, and the countless woes and wrongs inflicted on them by their conquerors.¹⁹⁶

In making his plans and decisions, General E. Kirby Smith had to keep in mind his entire Trans-Mississippi Department. Although General Banks appeared ripe for capture, still General Steele was advancing from Arkansas and it was necessary for General Smith to protect his department from that direction. His view of the situation is illustrated as follows:

... History teaches us also, that subordinate commanders of armies and districts, with their eyes fixed upon their own localities, and the enemy opposed to them, and with the natural desire of distinction and success, are prone to magnify the importance of their position, and to think

¹⁹⁵ Dorsey, *Recollections of Henry Watkins Allen*, 263-264.

¹⁹⁶ Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, 189.

that they should be especially reinforced. But the general commanding a Department, dependent upon itself for its means of defense and offence, must take a survey of the whole field of action, and must decide, upon his own responsibility, what is best for the whole cause. He is not to look on the winning of a battle alone, he must win campaigns. The subordinate officer is given to an army and directed to operate with it for specific objects. If it is lost, the higher authority is expected to supply its place. A commander in General Smith's position, charged with the defence of an immense territory, with insufficient means, and isolated from all support, cannot lightly jeopardize an army whose loss he cannot repair, nor allow one column of the enemy to seize upon arsenals, depots, workshops, etc., although by permitting it he might win renown, or possibly inflict great loss upon him in another quarter.¹⁹⁷

The weakening of General Taylor's command by the withdrawal of the divisions of General Walker, Churchill, and Parsons led to much bitter correspondence with General Smith with the result that, on July 22d, General Taylor and his infantry were ordered to the east side of the Mississippi River by General Braxton Bragg.¹⁹⁸

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¹⁹⁷ Dorsey, *Recollections of Henry Watkins Allen*, 273.

¹⁹⁸ *The War of the Rebellion*, I, 34, part 1, p. 548.

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THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU IN LOUISIANA*

By JOHN CORNELIUS ENGELSMAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, NATIONAL BACKGROUND, AND ORGANIZATION

A generation ago Woodrow Wilson said: "It is now full thirty years, and more, since the processes of Reconstruction were finished, and the Southern states restored to their place in the union. Those thirty years have counted for more than any other thirty in our history, so great have been the speed and range of our development, so comprehensive and irresistible has been the sweep of change amongst us. We have come out of the sixties. The time seems remote, historic not of our day. We have dropped its thinking, lost its passion, forgot its anxieties, and should be ready to speak of it, not as partisans but as historians."¹

Reconstruction was the natural aftermath of the War between the States. It had a Northern as well as a Southern phase. This monograph is restricted to one small segment of the Southern phase of reconstruction—namely, the work of the "Freedman's Bureau" as it concerned the State of Louisiana. However, it is best, in making a study of post-bellum conditions in Louisiana, to consider the whole South, in order to comprehend more clearly the part played by Louisiana. It is the purpose of this chapter to sketch briefly a picture of the post-bellum South; to present the condition of the land and people there; to show what had been done to alleviate suffering as Northern control spread over a wider and wider area; and, finally, to analyze the fight for, and introduction of, the "Freedman's Bureau" as a direct aid to the millions of blacks and refugees whom the war had left bewildered, desolate, and ignorant of the real meaning of freedom. From this pattern, incomplete and sketchy though it must necessarily be, one may turn in the chapters following, to Louisiana's struggle to fit an old system to a new order of society under government direction.

* Master's thesis in History, Louisiana State University, 1937.

¹ Woodrow Wilson, "The Reconstruction of the Southern States." *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXXVII (1901), 1.

In speaking of reconstruction, one does well to keep in mind that "outside of a few leaders, negroes had very little influence upon the course of events." It was a fight between white men, with the negro as the cause and object of their quarrel.²

As the victorious federal forces slowly moved into the South, they found themselves faced with a difficult situation. In many instances they ruined the land as they went along—burning crops, tearing up roads and railroads, and destroying manufacturing plants and homes. In others, the retreating Southern forces committed the work of destruction to prevent property from falling into Northern hands. With a country depleted of all they depended upon for sustenance, the people presented "a sad picture of want and misery."³

The problem presented was too large for the army of occupation to handle. It began to call upon the North to aid in the relief of suffering, and to direct education and labor. Already in the early part of 1862, General W. T. Sherman appealed for help for Negroes in the captured portion of South Carolina. He added that the benevolent and philanthropic people of the North should do more than provide just food and clothing. The primary wants came first, but, after that, instruction was also very necessary.

Such appeals made a strong impression on the North, and interest continued for years after the war ceased. Soon after Sherman's request, groups calling themselves Relief Associations, Freedmen's Societies, or some similar name, were formed in several parts of the North, principally in large cities. These societies not only collected supplies and sent them South, but also sent and supported teachers, ministers, and labor organizers. The President and his ministers of War and the Treasury had only limited power to aid these groups, although they did what they could to show their approval. From 1862 onward, the relief associations spent millions in rehabilitation work.⁴ They were to the poor bewildered Negro what the "Sanitary Association" was to the soldier who had become sick or wounded.⁵

It was not long, however, before those who knew the magnitude of the situation saw that these benevolent efforts were but

² Booker T. Washington, *The Story of the Negro*, 2 vols. (New York, 1909), II, 28.

³ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, Pt II, pp. 499, 500.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 498.

⁵ *New York Tribune*, March 30, 1865.

stopgaps in the work to be done. "The numerous societies organized were local and acted independently of each other. A general plan was needed, and unity of action, with a central directing power, and larger means than could be furnished by private charities."⁶ Thus began the agitation which, after two years, resulted in the creation of the "Freedmen's Bureau" by Congress on March 3, 1865.⁷

Then came the end of the war and collapse of the Confederacy. The Southern attempt at disunion had been a misfortune. What seemed a misfortune also, was the sudden emancipation of several million slaves. The problem it created was so great and vital, that it could not be settled by the stroke of a statesman's pen or the forceful administration of an army of occupation. The fact that today, some seventy years later, it is still of major importance, gives some idea of its magnitude.⁸ General Howard, in speaking of this problem, says:

The sudden collapse of the rebellion, making emancipation an actual, universal fact, was like an earthquake. It shook and shattered the whole social system. . . . Even the well-disposed and humane land owners were at a loss what to do, or how to begin the work of reorganizing society, and of rebuilding their ruined fortunes. Very few had any knowledge of free labor, or any hope that their former slaves would serve them faithfully for wages. On the other hand, the freed people were in a state of great excitement and uncertainty. They could hardly believe that the liberty proclaimed was real and permanent. Many were afraid to remain on the same soil that they had tilled as slaves, lest by some trick they find themselves again in bondage. Others supposed that the government would either take the entire supervision of their labor and support, or divide among them the lands of conquered rebels, and furnish them with all that might be necessary to begin life as independent farmers.⁹

The Emancipation Proclamation, state action, and the Thirteenth Amendment freed the Negro in the eyes of the law. This did not, however, make him free. Any such movement takes years to complete. "It required time, patience, and extraor-

⁶ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, Pt. II, p. 499.

⁷ William R. Hooper, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *Lippincott's Magazine*, VII (1871), 610.

⁸ Hilary A. Herbert, "The Conditions of the Reconstruction Problem," *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXXVII (1901), 145.

⁹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, Pt. II, pp. 499, 500.

dinary wisdom on the part of the government to solve the problem of this people's existence—of this 'nation born in a day'."¹⁰

Many people thought, at first, that all the blacks should be taken from the South and deported, or placed somewhere by themselves. Others ridiculed the idea as foolish. They said that the South needed to expand, and needed more labor, not less. To have deported the Negro would have created an even worse problem than the one with which they were faced.¹¹ The divergent viewpoints of the two sections of the country on the Negro question was a major point of trouble, and neither section was willing to see the other's side of the question or to co-operate in working out a harmonious plan. George Merriam says: "The South's assumption was that the negro was intrinsically an inferior and must be kept subordinate to the white man. The North, in its management of political reconstruction, had practically assumed that the negro was the equal of the white man and was so to be treated. There was a third view of the matter—that the negro was at an inferior stage of manhood, and the necessary task was to develop him."¹² This Southern view was held by many. They thought of Lincoln's proclamation as an unfortunate mistake. Said B. C. Truman, after a trip through the South: "The persistency and honesty with which many, even of the greatest men of the South, hold to this opinion, is almost unaccountable to a Northern man, and is an element of such magnitude that it cannot well be omitted from the consideration."¹³ George Fitzhugh illustrates the same opinion when he contended that, if let alone, the South would have worked out the Negro problem in the most satisfactory manner for both races. He did not think they could be given the freedom they had enjoyed as slaves when fifty per cent were loafers, but rather that they should be made to work for their own good, for, if let alone, they would never prepare for a rainy day or old age, and would finally become dependents upon society. Further, in his opinion, the North had no right to force Negro equality on the South when it had proven to be such an abject failure in their own section.¹⁴

¹⁰ George W. Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America*, 2 vols. (New York, 1883), II, 378.

¹¹ Report of Carl Schurz, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 44.

¹² George S. Merriam, *The Negro and the Nation* (New York, 1906), 355, 356.

¹³ Truman Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 43, p. 8.

¹⁴ "The Negro Imbroglio," *De Bow's Review*, A.W.S., III (1867), 521.

The black man had traded everything for liberty. For centuries all his thinking had been done for him. He had not had to think in terms of the future, or even of the present. All his wants had been provided for him. Now, suddenly, he was set adrift in a competitive world where he had to look out for himself or go hungry. "Liberty was to him, not an abstraction but a very concrete thing, and involved the ability to roam at will, and to enjoy in lazy contemplation the one thing he could realize—cessation of forced labor under the eye of the overseer." Both he and the white man needed to learn the rules of "free contract" before they would work together in a state of mutual trust.¹⁵ The Negro had to be made to realize the "stubborn realities of life," and the white to realize that Negro idleness was not an inborn condition, but "simply reaction" to a changed status.¹⁶ The North tried to teach this to both of them. What happened later was, perhaps, partly the fault of an overbearing Congress but partly also the fault of the Southern lawmakers, who, "when legislating as a conquered people, . . . failed adequately to consider and be guided by the prejudices of their conquerors."¹⁷

Before the Bureau was created to take charge of freedmen's affairs, this work was done mainly by agents of the War and Treasury departments. They had, at first, little real system in the giving of rations and relief, and many of the poor whites and freedmen began to get the idea they would be supported for life.¹⁸ Where they controlled the land, they exercised almost as much power over the former slaves as their masters had previously.¹⁹ When the war ceased, they divided the states into military departments with a commander in charge and a superintendent for the freedmen. They had large enough army forces to divide the states into districts. Each district had a controlling officer in charge, who regulated all labor, education, and relief. These efforts were extensively aided by Northern philanthropic societies, and when the Bureau took charge they found this effort had already accomplished a great deal of good.²⁰

¹⁵ John J. Halsey, "The Failure of Reconstruction," in William H. Smith, *A Political History of Slavery*, 2 vols. (New York, 1903), II, 412, 413.

¹⁶ Williams, *History of the Negro Race*, II, 384.

¹⁷ William A. Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic, 1863-1877*, in A. B. Hart (ed.), *The American Nation: A History*, 28 vols. (New York), XXII (1907), 59.

¹⁸ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, Pt. II, p. 501.

¹⁹ Walter L. Fleming, *Documentary History of Reconstruction*, 2 vols. (Cleveland, 1906-1907), I, 244.

²⁰ Oliver O. Howard, *Autobiography*, 2 vols. (New York, 1907), II, 227, 228; Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 2.

The work of the government agencies lacked uniformity and efficiency.²¹ A permanent central agency was needed, to which could be intrusted all affairs relating to freedmen.²² It took Congress some two years of argument and political bickering before legislation with that end in view materialized.²³ On January 12, 1863, Thomas Eliot introduced a bill from the House Committee on Emancipation for a "Bureau of Emancipation."²⁴ One week later Henry Wilson introduced a similar measure into the Senate.²⁵ Nothing was done about it, however, before Congress adjourned.

In December of the same year, another attempt was made, through Eliot and the Select Committee of Nine, to secure some type of "Emancipation Bureau." This attempt also failed.²⁶ Discussion waxed hot on the floor of both houses every time the subject was brought up. Those against the bill fought it furiously. Jacob Cox of Ohio thought it a grafting proposition. Said he, "It opens a vast opportunity for greed, tyranny, corruption, and abuse."²⁷ Others who favored the bill, such as Wilson, Eliot, and William Kelley of Pennsylvania, were just as outspoken in its favor. Kelley thought the passage of the bill would help all classes—North and South, whites and blacks—by giving Southerners a chance to rent farms and raise those commodities essential to the North, and by assisting the government in finding work for the army of blacks on relief.²⁸

The topic of a Negro bureau came up again in February, 1864. Again, no such agency was legislated into existence.²⁹ Finally, on February 2, 1865, through the work of a Committee on Conference of the Senate and House, a compromise measure called "A bill to establish a Department of Freedmen and Abandoned Lands" was introduced into the House.³⁰ Another month of

²¹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 2.

²² Need of a Bureau, in *House Executive Documents*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 1, p. 8.

²³ Hooper, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 610.

²⁴ *Congressional Globe*, 37 Cong., 3 Sess., Pt. I, 282; Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, Pt. II, p. 499.

²⁵ Paul S. Peirce, *The Freedmen's Bureau* (Iowa City, 1904), 34.

²⁶ W. E. B. DuBois, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXXVII (1901), 356; *Congressional Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. I, 19.

²⁷ *Congressional Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. I, 709.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 773.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 740.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2 Sess., Pt. I, 562, 563.

wrangling went by. Lazarus Powell of Kentucky, one of the bill's foremost opponents, maintained that "these overseers and negro-drivers that you are to send down there will be your broken-down politicians and your dilapidated preachers. . . . That description of men who are too lazy to work and just a little too honest to steal."³¹ In spite of the strong opposition, however, the extreme necessity for some central organization was felt. A conference committee brought in a new bill on February 28th which was more favorably received.³² On March 3, 1865, this bill creating a "Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands" was passed by both Houses of Congress. The President affixed his signature the same day.³³

The act provided that the agency should be a division of the War Department, and exist for one year after the cessation of the war. All matters concerning Negroes in the rebel states should be under its jurisdiction. The head of the agency was to be a commissioner appointed by the President with the Senate's consent, to have a \$3,000 a year salary and to post a \$50,000 bond. He could requisition food, fuel, and clothing for immediate aid from the Secretary of War. The President, with the Senate's consent, could appoint assistant commissioners to the number of ten. They should be under the commissioner, receive a \$2,500 salary, and post bond for \$20,000. Military officers could be appointed without increase in pay. The commissioner had to make one report at each session of Congress, and as many more as that body asked. The assistant commissioners were to report quarterly or oftener. The commissioner could assign abandoned or confiscated land to Unionists in lots or not more than forty acres, at a rent of not more than six per cent of the land value. The government would insure the ownership of this land for a period of three years, and the lessee could buy at any time he wished.³⁴

This act does not appear to have been well thought out. It did provide for relieving the freedmen, but made no appropria-

³¹ *Ibid.*, Pt. II, 1308.

³² *Ibid.*, 1182.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1348, 1371, 1402; Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, Pt. II, p. 499.

³⁴ *Congressional Globe*, 38 Cong., 2 Sess., Pt. II, Appen., 141.

tion to carry the provision into effect. The Bureau had to rely, at first, on the military, augmented by rents, school taxes, and tuition. The fund from which this agency received the most help was the "Freedmen's Fund," which was "a tax on salaries, colored employees, cotton, fines, and donations." Without this aid they would have been severely cramped in their efforts.³⁵

For the post of commissioner of this new agency, a man of exceptional ability and trust had to be secured. General Benjamin Butler, General Nathaniel Banks, Judge James Birney, and Thomas Webster, Jr., were mentioned for the position, with Butler said to have the support of most officials.³⁶ The President, however, thought otherwise, and gave the appointment to Major General Oliver Otis Howard, commander of the "Army of Tennessee," who accepted the position on May 12.³⁷ He proved to be a good choice as he was a leader of men, possessed of a strong sense of justice, and was familiar with the social relations of Southern blacks and whites. His orders showed him to be a man of moderate views.³⁸ He went to work immediately, ordered the things he needed from the Quartermaster's Department, and sent the assistant commissioners to their respective posts.³⁹ As the labor question made quick action a necessity, he wanted these assistants settled at their appointed places as soon as possible. All these men, with the exception of the assistant for Louisiana, were appointed from the army.⁴⁰ In order to have just ten assistants as arranged by law, Howard combined the states of South Carolina and Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee, and Missouri and Arkansas, under one man each. All other assistants had jurisdictions consisting of single states.⁴¹

The assistant commissioners were to be the pivots around which the entire system worked, aiding both planters and freedmen in their new relationship.⁴² They had to be men of ability.

³⁵ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 7, p. 2; *Annual Cyclopaedia*, 42 vols. (New York, 1864-1903), V, 371.

³⁶ *New York Tribune*, March 6, 8, 1865; *New Orleans Times*, March 2, 1865.

³⁷ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 1; Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 209.

³⁸ *Annual Cyclopaedia*, V, 371.

³⁹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 3.

Howard soon found that with the wide scope of his authority, it would be impossible to do more than supervise matters. Therefore, he merely laid down the broad general policies for the assistants to follow, relying on their ability and character to work out a plan best suited to the needs of each individual state.⁴³ For supervisory purposes, one of his first orders ruled that they should make detailed monthly reports to him.⁴⁴

Howard did not want his unit to be divorced entirely from the military. He ordered, therefore, that the assistants be under the ultimate direction of the Department Commanders. These two divisions of armed rule clashed somewhat; but by selecting agents, in many cases, who were also in the military, an attempt was made to minimize friction.⁴⁵

The state heads organized their departments into "districts, counties, or parishes,"⁴⁶ and appointed subassistant commissioners for these districts, each with a corps of local officers, or citizens of the locality. In many parts of the country they merely inspected at infrequent intervals, until it became safe to travel unguarded in that area.⁴⁷

General Howard, following his appointment, selected a personal staff consisting of two aides-de-camp, and two acting aides-de-camp, and divided his organization into four main divisions. He appointed the heads and their clerks, and left the appointment of other minor officials to the discretion of these division executives. The four divisions were: "one of lands, embracing abandoned, confiscated, and those acquired by sale or otherwise; one of records, embracing official acts of the commissioner, touching labor, schools, quartermaster and commissary supplies; another of financial affairs; and the fourth the medical department."⁴⁸ These, "with the addition of a corps of assistant quartermasters, inspectors of plantations, provost marshals for freedmen, bureau missionaries, bureau counsellors, bureau printers, bureau storekeepers, superintendents of mar-

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, Pt. II, p. 499.

⁴⁴ *Annual Cyclopaedia*, V, 372.

⁴⁵ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 755; Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic*, 33.

⁴⁶ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 43.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; *Annual Cyclopaedia*, V, 372.

⁴⁸ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 2.

riage relations, district superintendent,"⁴⁹ and state superintendents of schools,⁵⁰ formed, virtually, the complete organization.

Created at a time when the colored people of the South were in a deplorable condition—crowded in the cities while the country at large was in need of laborers—the Freedmen's Bureau had a huge task set before it, and very little time in which to do it.⁵¹ By the terms of the act creating it, the agency was to remain in existence for only one year after the cessation of hostilities. This seemed to indicate its termination some time in 1866.⁵²

By the fall of 1865 pressure was being placed on Congress to extend the life and enlarge the activities of this unit of government. Howard, in his annual report, gave seven reasons why it should be continued: The land question was still unsettled; it was the only thing that stood between the freedmen and stringent black codes; the Bureau had the confidence of the freedmen and could get them to work, while no other organization could; the educational work would stop if left to the states; the states had not the Bureau relief facilities; the poor whites needed care as well as the blacks; the Bureau was a big factor in inducing immigration to the South.⁵³ How much effect this communication had in subsequent congressional action it is impossible to judge.

The passage of several Black Codes in 1865 seems to have had some effect. Although nullified by Bureau and military action, the enactment of these laws showed that the South was not thinking too much of Northern prejudice in legislating as a conquered people. Their action appeared to Congress as an attempt to re-enslave the blacks and to nullify one of the purposes of the war.⁵⁴

On January 5, 1866, Lyman Trumbull reported a bureau extension bill from the Judiciary Committee of the Senate.⁵⁵ Although strongly opposed by the leading Democrats, it was passed on the ninth of February.⁵⁶ This bill continued the agency

⁴⁹ Peirce, *Freedmen's Bureau*, 49.

⁵⁰ Appointed by the state assistant commissioners, *Annual Cyclopaedia*, V. 373; opposing view in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 3.

⁵¹ Hooper, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 610, 611.

⁵² *Congressional Globe*, 38 Cong., 2 Sess., Pt. II, Appen., 141.

⁵³ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 323.

⁵⁴ See below, Chapter IV.

⁵⁵ *Congressional Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. I, 129.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 770.

indefinitely, and also provided for homesteading and schools.⁵⁷ Its passage was greeted with a storm of protest in Louisiana. Such papers as the *Boston Post* and the *New York Commercial Advertiser* also wrote scathing editorials concerning it.⁵⁸

President Johnson returned the bill to the Senate with his objections on February 19. He disagreed mainly on the grounds of constitutionality, and the permanence of the arrangement.⁵⁹ On the 21st his veto was upheld by a vote of thirty to eighteen. Several Conservative Republicans united with the Democrats to defeat the measure.⁶⁰

A bill, in many respects similar to that passed in February, was introduced in the House of Representatives on May 22, 1866.⁶¹ It was passed on July 3rd after Senate amendment and action by a conference committee.⁶² The President returned it to the House on July 16th with a veto message that deplored class legislation and the use of war powers in time of peace.⁶³ The bill was passed over his veto the same day, by both Houses, with a vote of one hundred and three to thirty in the House, and thirty-three to twelve in the Senate.⁶⁴

This act differed in several points from the bill of the previous winter: it continued the Bureau for a term of two years, and provided for two more assistant commissioners; there was a provision for the sale of lands to freedmen in certain sections of South Carolina, at \$1.50 an acre in twenty-acre lots; it gave the Bureau a great deal of power in providing for Negro schools and education, and in interfering with state judicial proceedings. These changes seemed to follow recommendations which had been made for Bureau betterment during the year of its operation.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Pt. V, Appen., 82, 83.

⁵⁸ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 16, 1866.

⁵⁹ *Congressional Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. II, 915, 917.

⁶⁰ The idea of making the Bureau practically a permanent administrative department seemed distasteful to several Conservative Republicans.

⁶¹ *Congressional Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. III, 2743.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Pt. IV, 3562.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Pt. V, 3849, 3850.

⁶⁴ This bill did not have the objection of permanence, which may have caused the failure of the February measure. In addition Johnson's actions seemed to be alienating from him conservative Republican as well as radical support. The act in February had lacked a two-thirds majority by just two votes. Morgan of New Jersey, Stewart of Nevada, and Willey of West Virginia, all elected as Republicans, had sustained Johnson. All three of these men voted with the majority in July. Of the twelve Senators who upheld Johnson's July veto, all but two (Norton of Minnesota and Van Winkle of West Virginia) were classed as Democrats. They held their seats as Union Conservatives.

⁶⁵ *Congressional Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. V, Appen., 366, 367.

It can be seen that this measure did not appropriate expense money, a deficiency which had curtailed the usefulness of the act of 1865. There was no need, however, for an appropriation in the bill of 1866, as Congress had authorized the first money support for the Bureau in the Army bill of July 13th.⁶⁶

The second Bureau bill was intended to continue its life until July 16, 1868, or until the states were fully restored to their places in the union.⁶⁷ Under this plan, in December, 1867, Howard issued an order that by February 15, 1868, all officers but the superintendents of education were to be dismissed in several of the border states. Louisiana and the lower South were to remain under Bureau control,⁶⁸ although the forces were to be reduced in those states. Military men were to be substituted for volunteer agents, and, if possible, the agents dismissed, and an Inspector sent out on an occasional tour in their places.⁶⁹

As the Bureau would expire by limitation in July, 1868, a bill was introduced in the House on January 31, to continue its existence for another year. It also provided for re-establishment, if necessary, from where it had been discontinued. As states were restored, the agency could gradually be removed.⁷⁰ This act passed Congress by June 19th,⁷¹ and became a law without the President's signature.⁷²

There was fear, at one time, that the President might discharge Howard from his position. To prevent this Congress passed an act on July 15, 1868, which also provided for Bureau discontinuance, except for the educational and bounty divisions, by January 1, 1869.⁷³ The act was vetoed by Johnson, and passed over his veto on July 25th.⁷⁴

In keeping with this plan, Howard ordered offices to be closed by November 1, 1868.⁷⁵ The only men to remain in each

⁶⁶ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 331.

⁶⁷ *Congressional Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. V, Appen., 366.

⁶⁸ *New Orleans Crescent*, December 18, 1867.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, September 19, 1867.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, January 16, 1868; *Congressional Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., Pt. I, 890.

⁷¹ *Congressional Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., Pt. IV, 3310.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 4039.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Pt. V, Appen., 551; Washington Dispatch, in *New Orleans Crescent*, July 16, 1868.

⁷⁴ *Congressional Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., Pt. V, 4478, 4479.

⁷⁵ Washington Dispatch, in *New Orleans Crescent*, October 16, 1868.

state after the first of the year, were a school superintendent and two assistants, an assistant commissioner, a disbursing officer, and three clerks.⁷⁶

The total number of officers and clerks had dwindled to eighty-seven by October, 1870, and was continually growing less.⁷⁷ Just one year later, except for the bounty division and the Washington hospital, the Bureau was dead.⁷⁸ Howard, at that time, recommended that the hospital be transferred to the proper authorities, and the claim division be taken over by the Army on or before July 1, 1872.⁷⁹ Congress, in an appropriation bill passed on June 19, 1872, approved this course, and gave the War Department authority to take over these remaining functions. It replied on June 25th with a general order which commanded that all remaining functions be turned over by June 30th. On that date, the Bureau, as such, ceased to function.⁸⁰

CHAPTER II

STATE ORGANIZATION, TYPE OF AGENTS, AND POLITICAL CONNECTIONS

The supervision of freedmen was, at first, exercised by the office of provost marshal under the military authority. As Union control was extended in the state, it was found necessary to create a special department for the colored, and General Banks instituted the "Bureau of Free Labor." Reverend T. W. Conway, who was appointed as head of this agency, had charge of all matters relating to freedmen, subject only to orders from the military commander. The state was divided into districts and an officer stationed in each with extensive power over Negroes.¹

When the Freedmen's Bureau was introduced into Louisiana, Conway's department was recognized as an excellent foundation upon which to build an efficient agency. It was ac-

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, November 25, 1868.

⁷⁷ *Report of Secretary of War for 1870*, I, 313.

⁷⁸ *Report of Secretary of War for 1871*, p. 451.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 42 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 109, p. 4.

¹ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 227; Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 28.

cordingly transferred in its entirety from the military in July, 1865, and Conway continued as assistant commissioner.² He was, at this time, in charge of the colored race in Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana, with headquarters at Shreveport.³

It took several months of activity before the Negroes' agency had been established in every part of the state. During this period of organization the district commanders and provost marshals acted as temporary agents,⁴ and many, especially in the western part of the state, were later continued in that capacity.⁵ Conway favored the pyramid type of structure; consequently, he appointed only the major assistants and allowed them to choose the local agents. He also named the officers for Alabama.⁶ These original appointees were as follows: "D. G. Fenno, acting assistant adjutant general; W. B. Armstrong, assistant quartermaster; O. J. Flagg, commissary of sustenance; Frank H. Bagley, acting assistant quartermaster; A. L. Snaer, department of information and complaint; H. R. Pease, president of board of education; E. W. Lowell, provost-marshal general of freedmen; A. V. Lowell, provost-marshal of freedmen in the city of New Orleans; J. M. Blanchard, assistant superintendent of the home colony in St. Charles parish; G. F. Randolph, assistant superintendent of the home colony in East Baton Rouge parish; H. H. Rouse, assistant superintendent at Amite; G. W. Bridges, assistant superintendent for Clinton and vicinity; L. S. Butler, assistant superintendent for Alexandria and vicinity; W. B. Stickney, assistant superintendent for Shreveport and vicinity; J. C. Clark, assistant superintendent for Opelousas and vicinity."⁷

With the exception of Concordia, Madison, Carroll, and Tensas parishes which were under the control of the Mississippi Commission,⁸ all Negro supervision was handled by the local department. In addition it directed affairs in three Texas and

² Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 8.

³ Canby Order, in *New Orleans Times*, June 7, 1865.

⁴ General Order, in *ibid.*, June 6, 1865.

⁵ *Shreveport News*, quoted in *ibid.*, July 3, 1865.

⁶ Conway Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, July 17, 1865.

⁷ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 8.

⁸ Returned to Louisiana control in 1866.

three Arkansas counties.⁹ The state was divided into thirty-three sections of from one to three parishes each, in the following manner:¹⁰

<i>District</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>
1.	Orleans.....	New Orleans
2.	Orleans and Jefferson R. B. (Right Bank).....	Algiers
3.	Jefferson L. B. (Left Bank).....	Carrollton
4.	St. Bernard.....	Ducros
5.	Plaquemines.....	Woodward Plantation
6.	Ascension.....	Donaldsonville
7.	Assumption.....	Napoleonville
8.	East Baton Rouge.....	Baton Rouge
9.	Iberville and West Baton Rouge.....	Plaquemine
10.	Terrebonne.....	Houma
11.	St. Mary.....	Franklin
12.	St. Charles.....	McCutcheon's Plantation
13.	St. John Baptiste and St. James.....	Bonnet Carré
14.	La Fourche.....	Thibodaux
15.	East Feliciana.....	Port Hudson
16.	West Feliciana.....	Bayou Sara
17.	St. Martin.....	St. Martinsville
18.	Vermilion and Lafayette.....	Abbeville
19.	St. Landry.....	Opelousas
20.	St. Helena, Washington, and St. Tammany.....	Amite City
21.	Calcasieu.....	Lake Charles Court House
22.	Pointe Coupée.....	Morganza

⁹ Stickney Report, in *New Orleans Times*, July 27, 1865.

¹⁰ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, pp. 15, 16.

23.	Livingston.....	Springfield
24.	Avoyelles.....	Marksville
25.	Rapides.....	Alexandria
26.	Sabine and Natchitoches.....	Natchitoches
27.	Winn and Jackson.....	Winnfield
28.	Caddo, Bossier, and DeSoto.....	Shreveport
29.	Washita, Union, and Morehouse.....	Monroe
30.	Catahoula.....	Harrisonburg
31.	Franklin and Caldwell.....	Winnsborough
32.	Claiborne.....	Homer
33.	Bienville.....	Sparta

The officers of the five main divisions were called sub-assistants, and those in charge of the thirty-three sections were named assistant subassistants. The lowest and most numerous class were termed agents. The most important headquarters division was the "plantation department" under F. H. Bagley, which decided the policies for labor, land, and relief.¹¹

Conway's plan of dividing the state changed very little in the four years of General Bureau action. In 1866, the districts of three parishes were redivided as were also three of the subdistricts.¹² The personnel of these areas also changed, and, as retrenchment progressed, agents of one parish were often given an added section.¹³ The main plan, however, was unchanged. In the latter part of 1868, there were eight subdistricts with an average of six parishes in each, containing three or four subordinate areas.¹⁴ When the main functions of the Bureau (except education) were discontinued, all the subassistants and subordinates were dismissed, and these control centers disappeared.¹⁵

In order to provide an efficient plan of agent supervision, several orders were passed: the officer should make monthly reports on all money expended, people employed by the agent, and

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8, 15, 16.

¹² Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 68.

¹³ Wood Order, in *St. Landry Progress*, December 21, 1867.

¹⁴ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1050.

¹⁵ *New Orleans Crescent*, November 25, 1868, January 7, 1869.

condition of the freedmen;¹⁶ he should gather the taxes levied by the Bureau in a zealous manner, and, if necessary, use the military force in its collection;¹⁷ he should work in harmony with the army organization;¹⁸ he should make a summary of the Bureau's principles and sphere of action in order to erase all doubt of its status at any time;¹⁹ and he should have the Emancipation Proclamation read at every plantation and copies in French or English given to freedmen, employers, and state officers.²⁰

The office of assistant commissioner changed hands several times during the period of Bureau domination. Reverend Conway and the military were continually at odds and so, in the interest of harmony, he was ousted from his position in favor of General Absalom Baird.²¹ General Baird was unable, however, to take office immediately, and General Joseph Fullerton became temporary commissioner on October 16, 1865.²² General Baird relieved Fullerton on November 11,²³ and held the position until October, 1866, when he asked to be replaced. For the last several months of Baird's management, he also acted as military head of the Department of Louisiana.²⁴ From the time Baird left, until November 27, 1866, the office was occupied temporarily by General Philip Sheridan.²⁵ General Joseph Mower then took charge of the office of assistant commissioner and later became state military head also.²⁶ After Sheridan had been forced to leave the Fifth Military District, he took temporary control also of this obligation.²⁷ On December 4, 1867, Mower was released from duty, and Colonel William Wood made temporary head of the agency.²⁸ He performed the required tasks until January 2, 1868, when General R. C. Buchanan was given command.²⁹ After the terms of the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 had been acceded to, a new Department of Louisiana (comprising Louisiana and Arkansas) was created, and Buchanan was made its temporary commander. To take his

¹⁶ Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 17, 1866.

¹⁷ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 21, 1865; *New Orleans Times*, August 19, 1865.

¹⁸ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 21, 1865.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, July 13, 1865.

²⁰ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 10.

²¹ *Ibid.*, No. 11, p. 29; *New York Daily Tribune*, December 21, 1865.

²² Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 26.

²³ Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, November 13, 1865.

²⁴ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 742.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 682.

²⁶ *New Orleans Crescent*, December 8, 1866, September 17, 1867.

²⁷ Mower Order, in *ibid.*, October 22, 1867.

²⁸ *St. Landry Progress*, December 14, 1867.

²⁹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1049.

place, General Edward Hatch received an appointment and occupied the Bureau post from August 24, 1868, until its discontinuance, with the exception of one month of 1868, when Major L. Hutchings acted in Hatch's absence.³⁰

Rules and orders of the Freedmen's organization were put into effect by the local agents. These men were of several types. In addition to the military provost marshals there were many civilians on duty at first.³¹ In December, 1865, the minor officers numbered 182, of whom 152 were civilians.³² By the first of the next year reserve officers were gradually replacing both the army men and civilians—twenty-five reported for duty in one day—and became the largest group.³³ In 1868 when the number of agents had diminished to forty-two they were all active or reserve military officers.³⁴

Many of the local agents appear to have been poor choices. Conway admitted that a great many mistakes were made in the selection of these minor officials, but placed the blame on the subassistants who made the appointments.³⁵ Fullerton said that some agents pampered the freedmen and, in addition, "their prejudices so blinded them that they could not properly approach the people with whom they had to deal, and it appears as though they went to the South to foster disunion, rather than to cure and heal."³⁶ Hatch blamed the dislike for the Bureau on these poor lesser agents.³⁷ Some of these men were not only incompetent and inefficient but also dishonest. The *Ouachita Telegraph* offered to prove in court that Captain Frank Morey of that parish defrauded Negroes of their bounty, and had been bribed for every service.³⁸ The Monroe agent, a man named Swenson, had to leave to avoid arrest for nonpayment of bills.³⁹ Commissary Scott of the Western Division embezzled some \$10,000.⁴⁰ Thomas Calahan of Shreveport was dismissed for dishonesty and later reinstated as a provost marshal.⁴¹ Fullerton found men in the main office in New Orleans

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1050; *New Orleans Crescent*, July 29, October 6, 1868.

³¹ *New Orleans Times*, December 7, 1865.

³² Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 38.

³³ *New Orleans Times*, December 7, 1865, January 9, 1866.

³⁴ Louisiana Contested Election, in *House Miscellaneous Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 154, p. 34.

³⁵ *New York Daily Tribune*, November 8, 1865.

³⁶ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 394.

³⁷ Washington Dispatch, in *New Orleans Crescent*, November 3, 1868.

³⁸ *Ouachita Telegraph*, October 14, 1868.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, May 13, 1868.

⁴⁰ *New York Daily Tribune*, July 26, 1865.

⁴¹ *Caddo Gazette*, quoted in *New Orleans Picayune*, November 23, 1865.

taking bribes and discharged a chief clerk.⁴² An agent at Lake Providence named Hannan absconded with \$8,000, but was caught in Charleston, South Carolina, and all but \$300 recovered.⁴³ George Inness, a Bureau parish officer, sold the supplies which were sent for relief of flood sufferers.⁴⁴ There were several others whose dismissal was a recognition of misconduct but the number mentioned should be sufficient to show that laxness in appointments was, perhaps, a factor in planter antipathy to the freedmen's agency.

There were many agents whose moderation and ability brought approbation from the most biased Democratic papers: J. Stimmel of Iberville, E. Wilcox of Lafourche, H. Hyams of West Baton Rouge, J. Clark of St. Landry, Lieutenant Merrill of St. Mary, the agents in Natchitoches and Sabine parishes, and many others. One paper mentioned a whole group whose work was satisfactory.⁴⁵ The Bureau as a whole might have been considered as an incubus, but previous to the political upheaval, its agents seem to have received treatment in accordance with their individual actions.⁴⁶ In 1868, however, several agents were driven from their posts because of feelings stirred up by the election.⁴⁷

It is impossible to determine the extent to which the Bureau was used as a political machine. Some Democratic papers spoke of it as a one-party organization run simply to enlarge the Republican group by giving it a Southern wing.⁴⁸ On the other hand, one Republican editor disowned that agency. He claimed that it misrepresented the facts and the Republican Party could not be held responsible for this misconduct.⁴⁹ One thing is certain, the Radical and Union leagues or clubs were sometimes formed by agents of the freedmen's organization and these groups supported its purposes.⁵⁰ It also aided the military in the work of voter registration.⁵¹ Jesse Lee, inspector general, whose work required contact with all agents, said that he thought the freedmen's officers were members of both major parties. General Hatch went

⁴² Fullerton Report, in *New York Times*, December 31, 1865.

⁴³ West Baton Rouge *Sugar Planter*, February 1, March 14, 1868.

⁴⁴ Buchanan Order, in *New Orleans Crescent*, August 16, 1868.

⁴⁵ West Baton Rouge *Sugar Planter*, March 3, May 5, 1866; *Ouachita Telegraph*, September 9, 1868; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 20, 24, 1865, January 4, 1866.

⁴⁶ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 68.

⁴⁷ Louisiana Contested Election, in *House Miscellaneous Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 154, pp. 474, 478.

⁴⁸ *New Orleans Times*, March 18, 1868; *Opelousas Courier*, March 31, 1866.

⁴⁹ *Louisiana Intelligencer*, September 2, 1868.

⁵⁰ *St. Landry Progress*, August 10, 1867; League Notice, in *ibid.*, August 17, 1867.

⁵¹ Howard Order, in *New Orleans Crescent*, September 19, 1867.

further in his statements. He claimed that some agents were secretaries of Democratic clubs and that fifty per cent of the Bureau state officials had admitted voting the Democratic ticket in 1868.⁵²

The headquarters of the freedmen's department appeared to wish that agency kept free from political affiliation. Howard instructed the officials not to engage in politics and threatened dismissal to any who accepted nomination to political office.⁵³ No evidence could be found that this order was disobeyed in regard to offices, but agents travelled through the state and made speeches against the Conservatives.⁵⁴ Several former officers, however, did stand for election: Reverend Conway, the first assistant commissioner, was elected State Superintendent of Schools;⁵⁵ Captain Amrein, former St. Landry officer, ran for parish judge;⁵⁶ and Frank Morey, former official at Monroe, was sent as state representative from Ouachita parish.⁵⁷

When the Negro Bureau came to Louisiana, it found organization problems lessened by the presence of a similar agency under the military. The functions and personnel of this department were transferred to the new administration which supervised colored affairs throughout the state. Public opinion, for the most part, was unfavorable at all times. This antipathy may have been due, in part, to several poor choices among the lesser officials.

CHAPTER III

RELIEF, TRANSPORTATION, AND HOSPITALIZATION

The Relief Division was one phase of Bureau activity that helped both whites and blacks. Aid was given in four forms: food and clothing; medical care and hospitalization; transportation; and assistance in securing jobs.¹

The necessity for issuance of food was apparent as soon as Union forces began to occupy Louisiana territory in 1862.

⁵² Louisiana Contested Election, in *House Miscellaneous Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 154, pp. 35, 38.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 475; Howard Order, in *New Orleans Crescent*, January 3, 1868.

⁵⁴ *Ouachita Telegraph*, October 24, 1867.

⁵⁵ *Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1870*, p. 151.

⁵⁶ *Opelousas Courier*, April 25, 1868.

⁵⁷ *Louisiana Intelligencer*, April 22, 1868.

¹ For employment aid, see Chapter IV, below.

Thousands of blacks came into New Orleans and lived there as paupers, having left their plantations and masters to come within the federal lines.² When Banks assumed command, he saw the need for an immediate settlement of this problem, and used various means to minimize the amount of food necessary for these vagrants: by encouraging their employment on plantations in conquered territory; by enrolling many of the able-bodied in the army until the practice was discontinued in 1864; by beginning a "Home Colony" at Algiers and at Baton Rouge for the aged or infirm; and by issuing food only to those most in need.³

Thomas Conway, as first assistant commissioner, continued the methods begun by the army. He desired, especially, that the poll tax be collected in an efficient manner. This tax compelled planters to pay two dollars each year for all their laborers between the ages of eighteen and fifty. Each laborer paid one dollar. This money was for the support of the aged, infirm, and schools. As many planters evaded the payment, the assistant commissioner ordered that this tax be paid by July 1 of each year. He instructed provost marshals in the various parishes to check thoroughly for all delinquents.⁴

During the war the Quartermaster General had been in charge of relief for freedmen. This office continued to furnish the Bureau with supplies but required an order on the War Department for everything issued. To remedy this situation the Department passed an order which required their officers to honor all requests for stores if signed by the state head of the freedmen's agency.⁵

After the cessation of hostilities the Negroes moved into the towns in great numbers and complicated an already bad situation. They crowded the city of Shreveport to such an extent that many died from lack of food or shelter.⁶ Reports from other parts of the state testified to similar conditions.⁷ One old darky said, "stay wid our massa and work, he'll feed and clode you, but cum to town and gits freedom, 'tis like confederate money, de more ye hab, de wuss it is."⁸ This did not appear to be the sentiment of the majority. Freedom meant, to them, a change of environment and

² *Annual Cyclopaedia*, III, 594.

³ *Ibid.*, 594, 595.

⁴ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 8, 1865; *New Orleans Times*, June 29, 1865.

⁵ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 13.

⁶ *Shreveport News*, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 20, 1865.

⁷ Rural Correspondence, in *ibid.*, July 8, 1865.

⁸ *Ibid.*, July 11, 1865.

liberty from the only thing they understood—forced labor.⁹ During the four years of Bureau activity, this problem was reiterated continually by the newspapers. They usually blamed the freedmen's agency or the presence of Negro regiments for it.

Conway, with the limited facilities available during the first year, believed that food should be issued only to the sick or the helpless. In September, 1865, he reported that less than a thousand blacks were receiving aid through his department. These people were ill, aged, or had lost their positions by the abandonment of plantations.¹⁰ This does not, however, give a complete picture of the relief situation at that time. The army, under General E. R. Canby, also furnished rations in various rural parts of the state.¹¹ Their action was necessary as some areas were threatened with starvation. Avoyelles parish alone reported almost two-thirds of the people in need of immediate help.¹²

Conditions were better in the latter months of 1865. There was an increased demand for labor and, consequently, less requests for aid. It was reported from Shreveport that no food was donated during the month of October except to hospital workers and the sick.¹³

The Bureau feared that indiscriminate relief might foster a permanent sense of dependence. They demanded, therefore, that the indigent make repayment as soon as they again commenced working. This ruling exempted only the sick, helpless, and orphans.¹⁴ The agency also attempted to secure state or parish assumption of the welfare problem. They promised to abolish government farms or "Home Colonies" if the civil powers resumed this function.¹⁵

The total number of rations issued from June 1, 1865, to June 1, 1866, was 379,717½. Of this amount 9,710½ went to refugees, and 370,087 went to freedmen.¹⁶ These rations varied, somewhat, in both size and content. The usual amount was one bushel of corn and eight pounds of pork per month for adults,

⁹ Halsey, "The Failure of Reconstruction," *loc. cit.*, 412.

¹⁰ *New York Daily Tribune*, August 3, September 9, 1865.

¹¹ *New Orleans Times*, September 17, 1865.

¹² *New York Daily Tribune*, September 19, 1865.

¹³ *Ibid.*, October 24, 1865.

¹⁴ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 15; *Annual Cyclopaedia*, V, 376.

¹⁵ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 120, pp. 3, 4; *New Orleans Times*, May 26, 1866.

¹⁶ "Editorial Department," *DeBow's Review*, A.W.S., III (1867), 332.

and half that amount for children. To break the monotony, there were occasional issues of sugar, coffee, and vegetables. Indigents received no more than a week's supply at one time. These portions were smaller where families could partially support themselves.¹⁷ In addition to food, excess or poor-quality army clothing was distributed to the needy.¹⁸

The flood of 1866 necessitated greater Bureau aid. The levees had received insufficient attention during the war and were in no condition to withstand much flood pressure. In the spring many gave way, and the resultant overflow caused much suffering. In May, when the number of destitute became large, Baird offered the help of his agents, and ordered supplies to be held in readiness for the needy.¹⁹ He sent fifty barrels of flour and twelve of pork, and then telegraphed Howard for permission to extend relief to all the needy.²⁰ While awaiting Howard's reply, he ordered all the agents to get written information from the parish police juries in respect to: the extent of the flood; the amount of crop ruined; the number of people needing aid which the parish could not supply; those without funds to buy seed for their next crop; and the best possible spot from which to distribute supplies.²¹ Permission was secured and the scope of relief was extended. A large supply of food was sent to West Baton Rouge Parish²² and 25,000 rations to the agent in Alexandria. There was to be no distinction made between whites and blacks.²³ The supplies were sent to Bureau agents who distributed the food according to lists made out by the police juries. These lists were followed in order not to confuse accounts with the government which expected a future payment.²⁴

The issuance of rations continued until fall, although in smaller amounts. There was some protest about the meagerness of these allowances. General Philip Sheridan's chief medical officer said, "a fair proportion of the deaths reported can be readily traced to a lack of proper nourishment. This has been particularly the case in Shreveport."²⁵ This need was not caused

¹⁷ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 644; Hooper, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 612; Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 257.

¹⁸ *New Orleans Times*, October 24, 1865.

¹⁹ Letter to Governor J. M. Wells, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 18, 1866.

²⁰ Baird to Levee Commission, in *New Orleans Times*, May 19, 1866.

²¹ Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Tribune*, May 19, 1866.

²² West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter, June 2, 1866.

²³ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 7, 1866.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, June 26, 1866.

²⁵ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 81.

by the flood entirely. Many freedmen were paupers because they were more content to live miserably in the city than on a plantation, and resisted all efforts to move them.²⁶

In August, 1866, the order was given to curtail rations in every way possible. October 1 was set as the final date for Bureau relief, except as to the sick and orphans. The police juries were then to assume all responsibility for the care of freedmen.²⁷

The parishes handled the problem of Negro aid in different ways. In Jackson Parish a tax of one dollar was assessed against all male blacks of certain ages.²⁸ Some of the others appear to have taken the attitude that the freedmen should provide their own food.²⁹ An occasional Negro's death from starvation seemed to indicate that it was not too efficient in places.³⁰

The Bureau expected the state to continue the care of indigent blacks. The civil authorities, however, were forced to ask for aid because of a crop failure in 1866 and a disastrous flood in the next spring.³¹ To offset this loss of crop, the government purchased a large amount of seed which was distributed by the freedmen's agency to those who could get seed in no other way.³²

The entire South was in a chaotic condition in the spring of 1867. Congress attempted to remedy the situation with a special appropriation of \$500,000. Louisiana received aid from this fund for five months. It helped an average of three hundred whites and two hundred blacks, at a cost of \$18,750. All but one of the eleven Southern States received more than this amount.³³ The aid received from the congressional donation was supplemented considerably by regular funds, and money from the Southern Relief Association which the Bureau distributed. It provided not only food but also medicine and cloth for the garments of women and children.³⁴ Every section of the state appeared to be in need of relief. Iberville Parish reported that almost a thousand were

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

²⁷ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 767; Hooper, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 611.

²⁸ *Ouachita Telegraph*, January 24, 1867.

²⁹ Henry Latham, *Black and White* (Philadelphia, 1867), 168.

³⁰ *New Orleans Crescent*, January 17, 1867.

³¹ *Ibid.*, September, 1866 to May, 1867.

³² *Ibid.*, March 28, 1867.

³³ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 641.

³⁴ Monroe *Intelligencer*, quoted in *New Orleans Crescent*, May 18, 1867; *New Orleans Crescent*, May 25, 1867.

receiving rations there.³⁵ Other parts of the state might not have had that large a problem but everywhere it seemed too great for the local government to handle.³⁶

The total number of rations issued from October, 1866, to November, 1867, was 248,107. Of this amount 17,500 went to refugees, and 230,603 went to freedmen. Louisiana ranked seventh among the fourteen states which issued food during that year.³⁷

The spring flood was but the beginning of a disastrous year. This, combined with later drought and insects, practically ruined the crops. Their sale, in hundreds of places, was insufficient for the Negroes' wages.³⁸ The planters were then forced to discharge these employees for lack of food to support them. Their care devolved once more upon the Bureau.³⁹ They had, by this time, worked out a relief system. Agents throughout the state compiled lists of the needy. These lists were sent in to the headquarters, and thus prevented too little or too much from being sent to any one section.⁴⁰ Rations were purchased within the state, as this was cheaper than to have them bought elsewhere and shipped.⁴¹ In December, 1867, 1,447 people were helped at a cost of \$3,411.88. By the following March this was increased to 2,210 people at a cost of \$4,919.52. More than seven hundred people in Baton Rouge made application in one day.⁴² The supply of vegetables and other food was sufficient for the people's needs by early July. The Bureau ordered, therefore, that the amount on hand be distributed and the activity returned to the police juries.⁴³

Relief was given to whites as well as blacks during the remainder of the year. General Edward Hatch said that the rations donated in the month of August were worth \$2,800. Whites received almost half this amount.⁴⁴ The total number of rations issued from October, 1867, to October, 1868, was 197,454.

³⁵ Letter, in *New Orleans Crescent*, June 14, 1867.

³⁶ West Baton Rouge *Sugar Planter*, May 11, 1867; *Opelousas Courier*, May 25, 1867; Mayor of Brashear City, in *New Orleans Crescent*, May 10, 1867; Letter from Trinity, Louisiana, in *ibid.*, May 22, 1867.

³⁷ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 640.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1050.

³⁹ Letters from Rural Louisiana, in *New Orleans Crescent*, August 10, 1867.

⁴⁰ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1050.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 647.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1050; West Baton Rouge *Sugar Planter*, February 15, 1868.

⁴³ Bureau Order, in *Opelousas Courier*, July 11, 1868.

⁴⁴ Louisiana Contested Election, in *House Miscellaneous Documents*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 154, p. 34.

Of this supply 182,326 went to freedmen and 15,128 to white refugees, with an average daily assistance to 806 blacks and 99 whites.⁴⁵

During the four years the Bureau controlled freedmen relief in Louisiana benevolent associations helped very few, and state authorities were in no financial position to assume the entire burden. In this period some people may have been aided unnecessarily but very few of the able were, for any length of time, objects of charity.⁴⁶

At the close of the war when transportation was still in the hands of the military, freedmen and refugees without money were transported free. Freedmen were also moved from overpopulated areas. School teachers and government employees received transportation in the same way.⁴⁷ When the railroads were returned, this free travel ceased, except for cases of necessity.⁴⁸

The Bureau had little money during the first year of its operation. This necessitated a curtailment of all but the important functions. In its appropriation of July, 1866, however, over a million dollars was allotted for travel expense. This allowed more liberalization of action in regard to movement of paupers, agents, and teachers.⁴⁹

Louisiana had an acute labor shortage for several years after the war. Freedmen were moved to these places of need under a strict set of rules. These regulations required that freedmen have contract agreements before they left and made arrangement to repay the cost of travel.⁵⁰ These requirements were systematized to avoid dishonesty. Certain people had victimized planters by posing as special transportation agents. They secured large advance rates and guaranteed to deliver the required laborers. Then they disappeared. The commissioner wanted planters to go directly to the office of the freedmen's agent with their labor problems.⁵¹

In the spring of 1868 there were labor shortages in several sections of the state, and many planters implored the Bureau to

⁴⁵ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1027.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1051; editorial, in *New Orleans Crescent*, February 11, 1868; Hooper, "Freedmen's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 612.

⁴⁷ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 275.

⁴⁹ *Congressional Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., Pt. V, Appen., 79.

⁵⁰ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 623.

⁵¹ Mower Order, in *New Orleans Times*, February 9, 1867; Order, in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 16, 1867.

provide the necessary Negroes. General R. C. Buchanan, who was assistant commissioner at that time, evolved the following plan: The planter went to the local agent and agreed to hire a certain number of laborers at a set rate of pay. The agent contacted a fellow officer. He collected Negroes who agreed to work for the stipulated wage and sent them to the first agent. The Freedmen's Bureau paid the cost of food and transportation. This agency required contracts to be signed immediately after the freedmen's arrival. Planters paid the cost of rations and travel in three monthly installments which they deducted from the laborer's pay.⁵² This type of relief continued till 1869, but in the final months few cases were reported.⁵³

The army generals supervised the health of the freedmen before the advent of the Negro agency. These supervisors assessed a "hospital tax" of five dollars per bale of cotton to defray expenses. This tax was suspended by General Canby in July, 1865.⁵⁴ The only hospital mentioned at this time was the Marine Hospital in New Orleans which was run by the Treasury Department.⁵⁵

The Bureau found Louisiana health conditions in a neglected state. Freedmen received little medical attention, as the planters were no longer responsible for their well-being. Many died from preventable diseases.⁵⁶ Mortality was as high as thirty per cent. This rate dropped to less than four per cent in a single year in the areas covered by the medical division.⁵⁷

The Medical Department, under Surgeon E. Griswold, became an efficient organization. This was necessary, as the plea was continually made to keep down expenses.⁵⁸ Medical stores were, at first, difficult to secure. There were no funds with which to buy them and the army was none too liberal. This was remedied when the army surgeon ruled on August 3, 1865, that the military should grant all necessary supplies.⁵⁹ This body also granted permission to establish hospitals.⁶⁰

⁵² Buchanan Circular, in *New Orleans Crescent*, January 29, 1868; *New Orleans Times*, January 29, 1868.

⁵³ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1019.

⁵⁴ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 1, 15, 1865.

⁵⁵ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 78.

⁵⁶ *New Orleans Crescent*, January 17, 1867.

⁵⁷ *New York Daily Tribune*, November 7, 1865; Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 21.

⁵⁸ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 19; *New York Daily Tribune*, July 13, 1865.

⁵⁹ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 258.

⁶⁰ Stickney Report, in *New Orleans Times*, July 27, 1865.

A hospital was opened in Shreveport on July 10, 1865, with accommodations for one hundred patients. This institution was established for a dual purpose. It provided care for sick freedmen and also a home for the aged and unfortunates of that area. The "Hospital tax" paid for the cost of the building. The only government expense incurred at the start was \$204.46 for a surgeon and nurses.⁶¹ This institution took care of forty patients during the first month of its operation. There were twenty-four attendants on duty during that period.⁶²

The Medical Division was rapidly enlarged. By December 1, in addition to the hospital just mentioned and the Marine Hospital in New Orleans⁶³ which had a capacity of four hundred and fifty-nine patients, there were five dispensaries or camps able to care for a thousand more.⁶⁴ By January 1, 1866, the dispensary at the "Rose Home Colony," on Destrehan plantation in St. Charles Parish, had been changed into a hospital, and a part of the Marine institution was set apart for the use of refugees. The dispensaries at New Iberia, Algiers, and Monroe remained as they were.⁶⁵ The estimate for the ensuing year called for twelve contract doctors and sixty attendants.⁶⁶ This number was needed to care for seven hundred patients.⁶⁷

In the late spring New Orleans feared a major epidemic was about to break out in the city. As a preparedness measure the Marine Hospital was ordered to reserve half its room for white occupancy in case the general hospital became crowded. This epidemic did not materialize in the expected proportions.⁶⁸

Although hampered till August, 1866, by lack of funds, the medical unit continued to expand. By October 1, they operated three hospitals and five dispensaries. This appears to have been the highest point of growth.⁶⁹

The period from September, 1866, to July 1867, was one of slow decline. It began with three hospitals and five dispensaries

⁶¹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1051; Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 89.

⁶² Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 90.

⁶³ It was also called the Freedmen's or Contraband Hospital.

⁶⁴ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 20.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1051; Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 78.

⁶⁶ The wage paid was about \$1,200 a year for contracting physicians and \$600 a year for attendants.

⁶⁷ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 37.

⁶⁸ Treasury Department, in *New Orleans Times*, May 12, 1866.

⁶⁹ Howard Report, in *ibid.*, April 18, 1866; Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 633.

in operation and ended with two hospitals and two dispensaries in use. During these eleven months there was but one commissioned officer on duty. There were sixteen contracting physicians in Bureau employ, one hundred and sixteen male attendants, and seventy-seven female attendants.⁷⁰ One hundred and thirty-five refugees and 5,297 freedmen were treated. Of this number, four hundred and sixty-eight freedmen and three refugees died—a black mortality rate of eight and one half per cent.⁷¹ The two diseases most prevalent were smallpox and cholera. There were five hundred and forty-nine cases of smallpox of whom forty-five died, and three hundred and ninety-two cases of cholera of whom one hundred and thirty died.⁷² In addition to the sick, various types of unfortunates received hospital attention. Seventy-eight insane, fifty-nine feeble-minded, sixty-three blind, eleven deaf and dumb, and six clubfooted persons received treatment during the year.⁷³ The per capita cost for medical attention for all these patients was \$2.73.⁷⁴

The work of retrenchment continued throughout the next year. Approximately one-fifth of the remaining medical officers had been discharged by the spring of 1868. This meant an increased load for those who remained.⁷⁵ The Bureau wanted the state to assume gradually the medical supervision of the freedmen. With this purpose in mind, the civil officers were furnished with hospital supplies and machines whenever they desired aid.⁷⁶ In September, 1867, Howard ordered that the medical force should be cut to a bare working minimum.⁷⁷ To accomplish this, hospitals were abolished, if possible, or changed to dispensaries.⁷⁸ In December, the New Iberia dispensary was closed, and the following May, the hospital at Shreveport was changed to a dispensary. The Shreveport patients, some thirty-six in number, were brought to New Orleans. The Algiers and Monroe stations were the only other medical centers in operation.⁷⁹

From July, 1867, to July 1868, the number of contract doctors had dwindled from seventeen to nine. No army physicians, and

⁷⁰ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 633.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 631, 632.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 635.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 637.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 638.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1024.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1025.

⁷⁷ Howard Order, in *New Orleans Crescent*, September 19, 1867.

⁷⁸ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 629.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 3 Sess., No. 1, pp. 1025, 1051.

only twenty-three male and fourteen female attendants were on duty during this period.⁸⁰ Treatment was given to 7,803 persons, of whom two were white. Of this number 595 freedmen died.⁸¹ Although there was a yellow fever epidemic during the year, the mortality rate was lowered on every ailment with the exception of cholera. This disease was fatal in sixty per cent of the cases. The better health record may have been due to the increased use of vaccination and the periodic inspection of Negro homes by Bureau agents.⁸²

When the Medical Division of the Bureau was discontinued, the dispensaries were shut down with little friction, as they sheltered no permanent patients. They were simply closed and hospitalization was made the duty of the state.⁸³ The New Orleans hospital presented a more difficult situation. It contained insane and aged, as well as sick freedmen. Howard attempted to transfer it to either the army or the state, but his offer was refused. It continued to run, therefore, for several months in 1869, although no new patients were admitted after September of the previous year.⁸⁴

From July, 1868, till the end of medical activity in June, 1869, 3,400 blacks received treatment. Of these cases 227 resulted fatally. This gave Louisiana the highest morality rate of all eleven Southern States.⁸⁵

There were, at first, three orphan asylums in New Orleans which received partial support from the Bureau. The "National Freedmen's Relief Association" ran one with the aid of government supplies and medical care. Madam Louise De Montié had charge of another with between sixty and seventy girl inmates in the Soulé mansion furnished her by the Freedmen's agency. The Bureau supervised the third or "Union Asylum."⁸⁶ In addition, it operated the "Asile de la Sainte Famille," a poorhouse with about eight inmates.⁸⁷

General Fullerton found that a change in the orphanage system was necessary. Madam de Mortié conducted a clean,

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1025.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1024.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1026.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1051.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, Pt. II, p. 497; Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 358, 361: Washington Dispatch, in *New Orleans Crescent*, November 7, 1868.

⁸⁵ *Report of the Secretary of War for 1869*, pp. 511, 512.

⁸⁶ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 261.

⁸⁷ Canby Order, in *New Orleans Times*, November 13, 1865.

orderly place, but the supervision at the "Union Asylum" was worse than none at all. This institution had approximately thirty inmates, of whom many were twelve to fifteen years old. The building was filthy and had no sanitary equipment. The children did no work of any kind. Fullerton ordered that these older orphans be apprenticed—the boys to the age of eighteen and the girls till fifteen. This order broke up the one asylum.⁸⁸ The Mortié institution was not interfered with and continued to operate until March, 1866, when the building was returned to the Soulé family.⁸⁹

Howard wanted, where possible, asylums to be placed in proximity to hospitals so that one staff could care for both. Louisiana followed this plan. On April 1, 1866, an orphanage and a home for the old and unfortunate were made parts of the Marine Hospital.⁹⁰ These asylums functioned until the Medical Division was discontinued.⁹¹

The Freedmen's Bureau was interested, primarily, in the welfare of the Negroes. This class received the greater share of attention. There was, however, no time in the history of this agency's relief activities when it did not minister to whites as well as blacks.

CHAPTER IV

LABOR, BLACK CODES, AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

In the years 1862-1863 the office of provost marshal had supervision of all matters concerning labor in that part of Louisiana under Union control.¹ When General Banks took charge of the military department, he saw the need for systematization and created the "Bureau of Free Labor" with a strict set of rules. This agency took charge of education and relief as well as labor.² W. E. B. Du Bois says of this system, it was like a little nation "with its 90,000 black subjects, its 50,000 guided laborers, and its annual budget of \$100,000 and more. It made out 4,000 pay rolls, registered all freedmen, inquired into grievances and redressed them, laid and collected taxes, and established a system

⁸⁸ Fullerton Report, in *New York Times*, December 31, 1865.

⁸⁹ *New Orleans Southern Star*, March 28, 1866.

⁹⁰ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 79.

⁹¹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, pp. 1026, 1051.

¹ Howard Report, in *New York Daily Tribune*, December 21, 1865.

² *Ibid.*; John Rose Ficklen, *History of Reconstruction in Louisiana Through 1868* (Baltimore, 1910), 132.

of public schools."³ Its main function, however, was to act as guardian to the plantation Negro. The marshals made terms between the planter and his working force. The black was to labor a certain number of hours and receive a stipulated amount of food and money. The wages were to range from three to ten dollars per month. Half this pay was usually to be given at the end of the month and the rest held till the end of the year. A system of punishment and reward was also instituted to increase the production from labor. Reverend T. W. Conway was appointed the head of this department.⁴ The chief assistants throughout the state were the provost marshals.⁵ Their methods were not too highly approved by the planters who thought that discrimination was shown in favor of the colored class. The owners also disliked the arbitrarily fixed wage scale. They would have liked some method of enforcement which prevented the Negro from breaking his contract at the behest of unscrupulous persons who promised higher wages.⁶

When the Freedmen's Bureau assumed supervision of the Negro, the former method of contracts was changed and several subjects of complaint were discarded.⁷ One of Conway's first acts was the establishment of a "Department of Plantations," which supervised all matters pertaining to land and labor.⁸ The individual contract method was to be continued. Agents were to aid in drawing up these agreements and to make wages secure by a mortgage on the crop or on the land. Wages were not to be arbitrarily set, but a minimum which was figured according to the wages owners had received for slave hire was to be enforced.⁹ Unless employed on a crop-share basis, the freedmen were to be paid quarterly and the Bureau notified of the payment. A ten-day period of grace was given planters in which to pay wages. If payment had not been made within that period, the employer was subject to a fifty-dollar fine.¹⁰ The money from these fines was, at first, used for Negro orphan asylums.¹¹ Later it helped defray general Bureau expenses.¹²

³ Du Bois, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 355.

⁴ *Annual Cyclopaedia*, III, 594, 595.

⁵ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 8, 1865.

⁶ *Shreveport Southwestern*, quoted in *ibid.*, July 9, August 5, 1865; *New Orleans Times*, June 27, 1865.

⁷ *New Orleans Times*, June 27, 1865.

⁸ Conway Circular, in *New Orleans Tribune*, August 16, 1865.

⁹ Washington Dispatch, in *New York Daily Tribune*, July 13, 1865; Howard Order, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 13, 1865.

¹⁰ Conway Circular, in *New Orleans Tribune*, August 16, 1865.

¹¹ General Canby Notice, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 1, 1865.

¹² *Ibid.*, July 21, 1865.

One of the things with which agents had to contend from the start was the planter's unwillingness to support any but the able-bodied. Many owners drove the infirm or aged from their homes and expected the Bureau to support these paupers. W. B. Stickney, subassistant in western Louisiana, ordered that all contracts should be by family and should take these helpless into consideration. He ordered instant prosecution of any planter who refused to provide for the feeble ones.¹³

Planters often complained that agents enforced but one side of the contract. They maintained that he forced the planter to pay taxes and conform to his part of the bargain, but the freedmen could leave, or do as they pleased, without interference. When assistants were reproached for negligence, they said that, without a guard, it was not safe to go through their territory. Another source of planter complaint was the number of fees that were charged by the Bureau men. A planter in Terrebonne Parish said he was charged for witnesses, blank payrolls, contracts, and for the laborers.¹⁴ In North Louisiana each employer of ten laborers had to pay one dollar, and all who hired less than ten had to pay fifty cents to help defray Bureau expenses. The agent also charged one dollar for every set of contracts that he filled out.¹⁵

The contracts were of many varieties, ranging from cash, or cash and support, to share-cropping, or rent of the land. Before the Bureau's arrival the planters had been told by the provost marshal to draw up agreements with their men which the freedmen's agency would later approve. Stickney found that these contracts were, on the whole, very dissimilar.¹⁶

The state was in a demoralized condition after the war, and capital for plantation operation was scarce. Many owners allowed part of their land to lie idle and worked the remainder without extra laborers. The laboring force was, however, inadequate for the amount in cultivation. This was, in part, due to a fear by the Negroes that in making agreements they signed away their rights of freedom.¹⁷ When agents were approached by blacks

¹³ Shreveport Gazette, quoted in *New Orleans Times*, July 7, 1865; *New York Daily Tribune*, July 14, 1865.

¹⁴ Letter, in *New Orleans Times*, July 10, 1865.

¹⁵ Stickney to Conway, in *ibid.*, July 27, 1865.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 87; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 18, 1865.

who wished counsel on this subject, they were advised to contract as soon as possible. If they were dissatisfied with their present location, they were helped to get work elsewhere, or persuaded to return home by the promise that the Bureau would safeguard all their rights.¹⁸ When Negroes were found who had broken contracts, the planters were often forced to allow their return even though the place had been filled.¹⁹ If, however, the reason for the desertion was considered valid, as failure to provide enough clothing, underfeeding, or excessive punishment, the laborer was provided with another position.²⁰

In order to protect the blacks and insure their wages, a planter could not sell any crops without a written permit from the head of the "Plantation Department." The Negroes' pay was a lien upon the crops and other plantation property. Until these wages were paid a mortgage was held against the property and followed that property even though sold.²¹ In the fall of 1865 the sale of crops was retarded for some time due to lack of this permission. The planters were incensed as they had no funds for wages until the crops were sold.²²

In spite of all that either the Bureau or planters did, the problem of insufficient laborers, idle freedmen, and contract breakers remained large in 1865. Conditions were so serious that one group of planters arranged for migration to Brazil.²³ When federal troops had invaded Louisiana, many of the Negroes from upriver parishes had been taken to Texas and not returned. This might account, in part, for the shortage of men in some sections.²⁴ The practice of roving around and crowding into towns, however, must be held accountable for a great deal of this insufficiency. This habit was so prevalent in some sections that officers refused to tolerate it and forced these vagrants to make contracts or move.²⁵ A Union officer in the interior explained this vagrancy as partly due to the presence of many Negro soldiers who contributed to the support of these idlers. This sentiment was later reiterated in an open letter to Governor Wells.²⁶

¹⁸ Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 16.

¹⁹ *Caddo Gazette*, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 17, 1865.

²⁰ Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 88.

²¹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 18; Conway Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, August 27, 1867.

²² *New Orleans Price-Current*, October 14, 1865.

²³ *New York Tribune*, August 14, 1865.

²⁴ Editorial, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 3, 1865.

²⁵ *Amite City Star*, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 21, 1865.

²⁶ Letter to Governor Wells, in *ibid.*, October 19, 1865; *New Orleans Times*, August 27, 1865.

Almost every man who visited Louisiana directly after the war stated that, in his opinion, the old planters were inclined to accept the new arrangement and treat the freedmen in good faith. They thought that the poor white class was the Negro's worst enemy as this group feared the eventual death of white supremacy and the labor competition.²⁷ An exception might also be made of some of the old French planters who were afraid of anything new and proved somewhat troublesome.²⁸ They were not alone in this fear. In addition to poor weather, one of the reasons for the smallness of the crop in 1865 may have been the fear to risk, with a new labor system, the large capital necessary for planting on an extensive scale.²⁹

Although not popular the Conway system received a fairly good trial. At the time he relinquished his position approximately 60,000 contracts had been signed throughout the state.³⁰ It is impossible to determine the number of workers enrolled under these contracts, but in a partial report for a month and a half from the Northwest district, comprised of eight Louisiana parishes and two counties in Texas, it was stated that the 3,105 contracts had covered about 27,830 laborers.³¹

When Conway left the state in October, he made a rather cheerful report as to existing conditions throughout the area. The *Picayune* disagreed with his statements in many respects. In editorials, letters from the interior, and excerpts from rural papers, it attempted to show that actual conditions were far worse than Conway had stated: that thousands of Negroes were still idle and where under contract worked very poorly; that many signed contracts and received food and clothing allowances, then moved from the parish and out of the reach of the Bureau agent; that in certain areas there was a constant and well-founded fear of insurrection.³²

When Fullerton took charge of activities, he thought labor was overregulated, and the constant interference made the Negro too excited and created a distrust in his mind of the planter's attitude. He thought supervision without control would teach the freedmen self-reliance and, at the same time, decrease the

²⁷ *New York Times*, December 31, 1865; Truman Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 43, p. 10.

²⁸ *New York Daily Tribune*, September 9, 1865.

²⁹ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 11, 1865.

³⁰ Editorial, in *ibid.*, October 8, 1865.

³¹ Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 90.

³² *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 2, October 11, 18, 19, 1865.

planter's antipathy to the system. Labor and wages, therefore should rely on the law of supply and demand.³³ As work was worth more in one section of the state than in another, agents should not set the rate of pay, or the days of work per week. They were to allow the blacks to make their own contracts and interfere only when aid was asked or discrimination shown. They were required, however, to sign all Bureau contracts and see that the colored people receive their rightful due.³⁴

In the latter part of 1865 planters tried various devices to make free labor more efficient. On some plantations employers paid their workers according to the amount of cotton picked.³⁵ In one parish several planters paid for a day's or half-day's work with varicolored tickets. These tickets could be presented for cash payment or used in place of cash at the stores.³⁶ There was also a great deal of talk on the introduction of coolie labor. At a later date a French agent was in Louisiana soliciting contracts for the importation of coolies from China and India.³⁷ There was desire to have the Negro soldiers replaced with whites in order to reduce race friction and make the freedmen more conscious of the need to work for a livelihood.³⁸ To increase the supply, some planters imported freedmen through agencies in Texas and Mississippi.³⁹ There were also labor agencies in Louisiana. One of them in New Orleans advertised labor for freedmen and freedmen for planters. They charged two and a half dollars for each laborer furnished and included the cost of the contract and other Bureau obligations.⁴⁰

Wages rose because of the demand for workers.⁴¹ It was hoped that this high rate would induce Northern white labor to come South and by competition with the Negroes force the blacks to increase their labor or leave. As the prices paid for the crops raised was also high, capital should flow southward. It was very difficult for large-scale planting to take place with the small amount of capital available in the state at that time.⁴²

³³ *Ibid.*, October 29, 1865; *New York Daily Tribune*, October 20, November 14, 1865.

³⁴ Fullerton Notice, in *New Orleans Times*, November 8, 1865; Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 29.

³⁵ *New York Daily Tribune*, November 10, 1865.

³⁶ St. John the Baptist *Avant Courier*, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 30, 1865.

³⁷ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 22, November 23, 1865.

³⁸ Letter from North Louisiana, in *New Orleans Times*, November 16, 1865.

³⁹ *New York Herald*, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 7, 1865.

⁴⁰ Advertisement, in *New Orleans Times*, December 6, 1865.

⁴¹ *New York Herald*, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 1, 1865.

⁴² *New Orleans Price-Current*, November 15, 1865; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, November 16, 1865.

When Baird became assistant commissioner in November, 1865, he formulated a series of rules which, with modifications, were used thereafter by the Bureau. These twenty rules were as follows:⁴³

I. All members of a family should, if possible, contract together. The wage scale should take into consideration the infirm and the aged. Parents should sign contracts for their children and the Bureau for orphans.

II. The wages should be fair to all concerned.

III. In winter twenty-six, ten-hour days, and in summer twenty-six, nine-hour days was the work limit for any one month.

IV. The laborer had to be paid for any extra work at the rate of six hours' work to a day.

V. Extra food was to be given at the rate of one-half ration for every six hours excess labor.

VI. In the settlement of wages food, clothing, doctoring, and schooling were to be considered as part of them.

VII. There was to be no work on Sunday except the absolutely necessary tasks.

VIII. A ration of food was five pounds of pork and a peck of corn per week.

IX. The laborer could make a choice between three dollars extra each month for himself and a dollar fifty per working child and three suits of clothes apiece each year.

X. Each family was to have a half acre of land for a garden.

XI. Workers could receive a higher wage and buy their own food and clothing. In that case the employer had to keep a strict account which would be open at any time to the inspection of the Bureau agent.

XII. If the freedmen worked for crop shares, one twentieth of his share monthly should be given to the agent for black education.

XIII. At the end of each month the laborer was to receive one-half of his wages; the other half was payable at the end of his contract. Each month the employer was to give five percent of these wages to the agent for the support of freedmen's schools.

⁴³ Baird Notice, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 16, 1865.

XIV. The laborer should lose all his wages for breaking a contract. With the agent as a judge he could also be fined double for time wasted or, if necessary, forced to leave the plantation.

XV. The contracts should state just when night or Sunday work would be required.

XVI. All rules that governed whites should be used to judge blacks.

XVII. If terms of a contract were a minimum, the Bureau could force an employer to give security for its fulfillment.

XVIII. If the employer had a system of rules and fines, the freedmen should know about it before the contract was signed. Fines were to be divided among the other workers or placed in the Bureau school fund.

XIX. Wages were to be a mortgage on the employer's property even after the sale of such property.

XX. The planter had to support the Bureau at the rate of one dollar for each employee between the ages of eighteen and fifty.

The freedmen's agency was not to interfere with agreements unless the Negro's rights were violated. Even in case of a discrimination the black still had the right to sign the paper if he so desired. Written compacts were preferred, but the arrangement could be oral. An attempt was made to keep the types of understandings to a minimum by the distribution of blank forms which contained the essential points necessary in the contract. These blanks were to be filled out in triplicate.⁴⁴

The Baird rules were more conservative than former regulations. Anti-Bureau newspapers advised the planters not to condemn them without a trial.⁴⁵ The settlement of wage problems between employer and employee was its most desirable feature in the owners' opinion. They still wished, however, some regulation for the control of vagrancy. The most criticism against these rules was directed at the amount of rations allowed. One planter wrote that this allowance was thirty per cent more than that given by the government to its soldiers and, with pork selling at twenty cents a pound, was ruinous to the employer.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Baird Circular, in *ibid.*, December 17, 1865.

⁴⁵ *New Orleans Price-Current*, December 23, 1865; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 19, 1865.

⁴⁶ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 19, 21, 28, 1865.

The new labor methods appeared to work well for the first year. Written contracts were not necessary, but were preferred by the Bureau and many planters, for the freedmen were more apt to stay for the entire year.⁴⁷ This system appeared to work best when cash wages were paid at frequent intervals.⁴⁸ Many radicals tried to persuade the freedmen not to sign long contracts.⁴⁹ Wages were high for farm and manual labor. During 1865 stevedores in New Orleans received \$4.00 per day.⁵⁰

The planter's solution of the labor problem in late 1865 was the passage of several "Black Codes" or compulsory labor laws in various parts of the state. A great many Louisianians held the opinion that the Negro would not work except under compulsion. Some thought this should be made to apply to the poor white class as well. They wanted the Bureau to enforce some type of vagrant legislation.⁵¹ When nothing was done by that agency, several municipalities passed the desired laws. The city of Opelousas in St. Landry Parish was one of the first to do this. On July 3, 1865, an ordinance was enacted for freedmen's regulation which ruled: there was to be no travelling without a permit; no Negro could rent or keep a house in town; permission of the mayor had to be secured for colored public meetings, preaching, carrying of weapons, and selling or trading of any kind; violation of any of these provisions carried a penalty of from two to five days' work or payment of a fine.⁵² After the passage of the Opelousas code, attempts to pass similar resolutions became general throughout the state.⁵³ The police jury at Franklin in St. Mary Parish made a series of rules which required the freedmen to have passes or permission for practically everything.⁵⁴ Restrictions of a like nature passed the police boards in St. Landry and Bossier parishes. The law in Bossier Parish permitted the arrest of all blacks who were not engaged in some occupation. If these men were found to be vagrants, they were forced to work.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 248.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 250; *New York Daily Tribune*, December 21, 1865.

⁴⁹ Baird Notice, in *New Orleans Times*, December 23, 1865.

⁵⁰ *New Orleans Times*, December 22, 1865.

⁵¹ *New Orleans Price-Current*, September 1, October 25, 1865; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 28, 1865.

⁵² City Ordinance, in *Opelousas Courier*, July 8, 1865.

⁵³ *New Orleans Tribune*, August 16, 1865.

⁵⁴ *New York Daily Tribune*, November 17, 1865.

⁵⁵ Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 23.

Some individual slaveowners tried also to keep their Negroes in a state of peonage. One Negro came to the Shreveport Bureau office carrying a paper which stated: "This boy Calvin has permit to hire to whom he pleases, but I shall hold him as my property until set free by congress. July 7, 1865 (Signed) E. V. Tully."⁵⁶

The Bureau and the military refused to allow the enforcement of these freedmen's codes. By general order colored people were allowed to travel without the use of passes.⁵⁷ The state was forbidden to arrest blacks except for violation of a valid law.⁵⁸ The actual ordinances were proclaimed null and void as soon after passage as the Bureau officers heard of them.⁵⁹

In December the Louisiana Legislature passed an elaborate series of laws to govern labor:⁶⁰ Negroes had to contract for the year within the first ten days of January; they were practically forced to labor for their former employer on his terms; the employer was to be the judge in case of dispute; for violation of these provisions there were fines and labor punishment.⁶¹ These laws received much publicity in the North, and on December 13, Senator Wilson introduced a bill into Congress which would have invalidated this pending legislation. Wilson called it "reslavement without the security of Provision."⁶² The effect of Wilson's action can not be estimated, but there is no record that this Louisiana legislation became law.⁶³ When Trowbridge was in New Orleans, the bill was ready for the Governor's signature. Trowbridge thought at that time that approval would wait until the soldiers were withdrawn.⁶⁴ In January one of the newspapers stated authoritatively that the measure had not become a law.⁶⁵

At the beginning of 1866 there were prospects of a good year for both planter and laborer. The staples were commanding a high price and planters, in the hope of a large crop, were willing

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *New Orleans Tribune*, August 16, 1865.

⁵⁸ Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 89.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 23; *New Orleans Tribune*, December 20, 1865.

⁶⁰ *Congressional Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. I, 39; *New York Daily Tribune*, December 29, 1865.

⁶¹ John T. Trowbridge, *Picture of the Desolated States and the Work of Restoration, 1865-1868* (Hartford, 1868), 408, 409; Edward McPherson, *The Political History of the United States of America during the Period of Reconstruction* (Washington, D. C., 1880), 43.

⁶² *Congressional Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. I, 39.

⁶³ Ficklen searched legislative records and found evidence that the bill had passed but no record that the Governor had signed it.

⁶⁴ Trowbridge, *Picture of the Desolated States*, 409.

⁶⁵ *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 10, 1866.

to pay high wages to insure a sufficient working force.⁶⁶ There was, however, still some feeling among planters that the black was their property. They might take advantage of the colored man in regard to hours and wages. Movement from one place of employment to another was also frowned upon, and men came to blows over the hiring of one's former workers.⁶⁷ The Bureau stood by as the freedmen's advisor. Although it used no compulsion to prevent the blacks from signing unfavorable agreements, they counseled the Negro to his advantage.⁶⁸

The favorable prospect for 1866 faded soon after the beginning of the year. Many country Negroes came into the city by working on passing steamboats for the price of their passage.⁶⁹ There was also a large change from one employer to another, as one of the Negro's ideas of freedom appeared to be movement from one job to another.⁷⁰ The biggest problem, however, was the refusal of many freedmen to sign contracts. The expectation of "forty acres and a mule" had been prevalent for some time.⁷¹ Many seemed to think that the big division would take place in the beginning of 1866. Every section of the state was affected by this misconception.⁷² Freedmen not only refused to sign contracts but, at the same time, would not leave the plantations. They seemed to think that by remaining on the scene of their labor they would secure their allotment of land from that particular plantation.⁷³ Various methods were used to overcome this attitude. Near Shreveport the Bureau aided in the enforcement of vagrant laws. They arrested the unemployed who refused to work and forced them to accept contracts on plantations or to labor for the state.⁷⁴ Attempts were also made to secure white laborers. While Trowbridge was in New Orleans, a hundred German laborers arrived who were under contract. Within a day all but seventy had broken their contracts to accept other jobs with larger pay.⁷⁵

⁶⁶ Trowbridge, *Picture of the Desolated States*, 409; Alvord Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. II, p. 121.

⁶⁷ Truman Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 43, p. 89.

⁶⁸ Hooper, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 613.

⁶⁹ *Ouachita Telegraph*, quoted in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 6, 1866; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour* (New York, 1866), 455.

⁷⁰ *New Orleans Times*, January 21, 1866; *Clinton Democrat*, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 21, 1866.

⁷¹ This idea may, in part, have come from the provisions of the Bureau act of 1865.

⁷² Rural Correspondence, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 18, 1866; *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 24, 1866.

⁷³ *New Orleans Times*, January 15, 1866; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 6, 1866.

⁷⁴ *Shreveport News*, quoted in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 6, 10, 1866.

⁷⁵ Trowbridge, *Picture of the Desolated States*, 414.

The labor crisis forced the planters to appeal to General Baird for aid. He claimed that the Bureau was doing everything possible to induce laborers to make and abide by some agreement. The agents were experiencing considerable difficulty as they wanted contracts to extend for a year, and the freedmen would rather work by the week or month. Baird wished the planters to co-operate and secure the Bureau agent's approval on all contracts. One copy should be kept in the department's files for future reference. This would facilitate the settlement of all disputes.⁷⁶

The labor situation had improved by the end of the month.⁷⁷ The work habits of the contracting freedmen showed improvement over the previous year.⁷⁸ There were still several points of complaint: many Negroes would only sign short-term agreements;⁷⁹ some areas lacked a Bureau agent and contract blanks;⁸⁰ there were also breaches of contract because of the lure of higher wages.⁸¹ One Negro on being asked why he broke his contract replied, "Why, you see massa, dey's only gibs me one-eighth of de crop, and ober on anodder place dar, dey givs one-sixteenth."⁸²

The employment agency was a disruptive force. They enticed the freedmen from their positions with promises of high pay in order to collect a fee by their rehirement.⁸³ These brokers, some of whom were said to have been former slave traders, seemed very active in 1866. The *New Orleans Tribune* maintained that many Negroes were kidnapped and sent to distant plantations whence they had not the money to return. Several cases were cited to prove its argument. The paper cautioned all blacks to carry an identification card. At the time of arrest this card was to be handed to the nearest bystander for delivery to the victim's family or to the Bureau. It was thought that this would reduce the number of disappearances.⁸⁴

By late spring the labor dissension had almost disappeared.⁸⁵ The crops were in good condition but advice had been disregarded and cotton instead of corn planted for the most part.⁸⁶ Due to the

⁷⁶ Alvord Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. II, pp. 134-136.

⁷⁷ *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 31, 1866.

⁷⁸ *Shreveport News*, quoted in *New Orleans Times*, February 6, 1866.

⁷⁹ *Terrebonne Civic Guard*, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 10, 1866.

⁸⁰ *Vermillionville Advertiser*, quoted in *ibid.*, February 2, 1866.

⁸¹ *Opelousas Courier*, February 10, 1866.

⁸² Letter, in *New Orleans Times*, February 16, 1866.

⁸³ *Iberville Banner*, quoted in *ibid.*, March 3, 1866.

⁸⁴ Editorial, in *New Orleans Tribune*, May 19, 1866.

⁸⁵ *Iberville Pioneer*, quoted in *New Orleans Southern Star*, March 28, 1866; *New Orleans Price-Current*, February 17, 1866.

⁸⁶ *New Orleans Times*, February 15, 1866.

labor shortage, only the small plantations or parts of the large ones were being cultivated in certain areas.⁸⁷ It was asserted that Bureau regulations were largely disregarded. The planters disliked the assessment of a fee for every service and also maintained that freedmen would rather settle differences directly with the employer than be subject to government interference.⁸⁸ The freedmen's agency changed its labor system very little during 1866.⁸⁹ Its enforcement depended, for the most part, on the attitude of the local agents.⁹⁰ General Sheridan claimed that he had not heard of a single case of contract dissension where Bureau rules were followed; while in compacts made outside that agency, which were either oral or poorly organized written agreements, there was a great deal of trouble.⁹¹

There is little record to indicate that agents thought the freedmen received harsh treatment in 1866.⁹² The *New Orleans Tribune* claimed, however, that in certain areas there were no Bureau agents and a system of bondage existed. They claimed by letters received from Pearl River and the parishes of Washington and St. Tammany, that whipping, poor food, and peonage were a general condition in that section, and the planters told their Negroes that, as freedom had been found worse than slavery, the government had sold them back to their masters. When the Negroes disbelieved this, it was asserted that a man who impersonated Baird had visited plantations and repeated the same falsehood.⁹³

In the spring a good crop had appeared in prospect, but through flood and later drought and insect attack it had diminished both in quantity and in quality. There was a fair yield in several scattered parishes but for the state as a whole the harvest was very small. There was no money for wage payment on some plantations and the Bureau seized these crops and sold them. The combination of these circumstances injured the hope for planter co-operation with the freedmen's agency in 1867.⁹⁴

The Negro inactivity during the first few weeks of 1866 was not repeated the following year. One newspaper remarked

⁸⁷ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, April 26, 1866.

⁸⁸ Editorial, in *ibid.*, March 3, 1866.

⁸⁹ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 70.

⁹⁰ *West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter*, May 26, 1866.

⁹¹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 743.

⁹² *New Orleans Times*, May 29, 1866.

⁹³ *New Orleans Tribune*, June 2, 1866.

⁹⁴ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, pp. 70, 74.

that the Bureau who thought the Negro would work like a white man and the planter who thought he would not work at all were both profiting from their errors.⁹⁵ The blacks signed contracts in sufficient numbers to insure a more adequate working force.⁹⁶ Many agreements both written and oral were drawn up without Bureau sanction, but the freedmen's agent had supervision over these compacts and was the arbitrator in case of dispute. In parts of northwest and southern Louisiana the government department was almost nonexistent, and the planters exercised control without interference.⁹⁷ One plantation had a unique system. Wages ranged from ten cents to one dollar a day and were paid in tickets corresponding in value to the amount of work completed. These vouchers could be cashed only on Saturdays, but supplies could be purchased at the plantation store with them at any time.⁹⁸ The scale of wages was high. A good worker could command as much as twenty dollars per month in addition to food, shelter, and medical attention. Employers complained that with this exorbitant rate a mediocre crop would little more than pay expenses and banded into groups which refused to pay more than a set maximum. The Bureau prevented these combinations from accomplishing their purpose.⁹⁹

Although the supply of labor was large enough to care for the amount of crop planted, the labor shortage was still general throughout the state. One parish reported a loss of man power from 14,000 to 4,000 since 1860.¹⁰⁰ Great numbers of colored people were migrating from Eastern seaboard states, but most of them went on to Texas.¹⁰¹ Planters were forced to deal with labor "brokers or go-betweens" who often took advance money under an agreement to deliver laborers and then failed in their promises.¹⁰² Owners also sent to other states for men. One planter received a consignment of fifty Negroes from South Carolina, and another ordered freedmen through the Bureau from Alabama and Georgia.¹⁰³

⁹⁵ *New Orleans Crescent*, January 2, 1867.

⁹⁶ *New Orleans Price-Current*, March 6, 9, 13, 1867.

⁹⁷ *Caddo Gazette*, quoted in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 16, 1867; Mower Order, in *St. Landry Progress*, December 14, 1867.

⁹⁸ Latham, *Black and White*, 167.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 167, 271, 272; *Plaquemines Empire Parish*, quoted in *New Orleans Crescent*, January 16, 1867.

¹⁰⁰ *St. Mary Planters' Banner*, quoted in *New Orleans Crescent*, January 28, 1867.

¹⁰¹ *New Orleans Crescent*, January 10, 1867.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, March 1, 1867; *Shreveport Southwestern*, quoted in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 12, 1867.

¹⁰³ *St. Mary Planters' Banner*, quoted in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 26, 1867; *Terrebonne Civic Guard*, quoted in *New Orleans Crescent*, April 2, 1867.

One of the sources of antipathy to the bureau from its beginning had been the system of fees for almost every service. On February 20, 1867, it was finally ordered that all services should be rendered without charge and the money on hand from that source be sent to headquarters.¹⁰⁴

Black labor was usually hired for the loading and unloading of ships. At first this was secured through contractors who sometimes defrauded the men of their pay. The Bureau would then prevent the ship's departure. This method was discarded and ship's officers enrolled and paid their employees at the docks.¹⁰⁵

The radical political clubs and the "registration boards" were considered detriments to labor by the Democratic press and some freedmen's agents. The "Moses Club" was often mentioned as offensive.¹⁰⁶ The government agent in St. Landry Parish invaded a radical meeting, told the Negroes they were wasting three days a week, and advised them not to allow an interest in politics to interfere with their labor.¹⁰⁷

As in the previous year, heavy spring floods were followed by drought and insect invasion.¹⁰⁸ The crops were an almost complete failure throughout the state—a final blow to the hopes of many people.¹⁰⁹ It was estimated that four-fifths of the planters were ruined and would not be able to hire laborers or raise crops in 1868 without aid. In some sections people were starving.¹¹⁰ The Bureau was accused, in part, for this condition. In Jackson Parish a meeting was held, and planters threatened to cease employing freedmen unless the regulations were changed.¹¹¹ One of the points of conflict was the agent's authority to audit plantation books and accounts for the freedmen's protection.¹¹² It was admitted, however, that white laborers were as lazy and as prone to break their contracts as the blacks.¹¹³

The final year of Bureau activity in the field of labor found many employers unable to begin crop cultivation without aid.

¹⁰⁴ Mower Circular, in *New Orleans Crescent*, March 6, 1867; Official Order, in *West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter*, July 20, 1867.

¹⁰⁵ *New Orleans Price-Current*, May 22, 1867; Mower Order, in *New Orleans Crescent*, May 19, 1867.

¹⁰⁶ *Louisiana Democrat*, quoted in *Opelousas Courier*, May 25, 1867; *New Orleans Times*, June 1 to December 1, 1867, *passim*.

¹⁰⁷ *St. Landry Progress*, February 22, 1868.

¹⁰⁸ Rural Correspondence, in *New Orleans Crescent*, July 9, August 14, 1867.

¹⁰⁹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1050; *ibid.*, 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 683.

¹¹⁰ *New Orleans Times*, December 29, 1867.

¹¹¹ *New Orleans Crescent*, December 5, 1867.

¹¹² *St. Landry Progress*, December 14, 1867.

¹¹³ *New Orleans Crescent*, December 13, 1867.

Commission merchants gave relief to some, and the freedmen's agency offered all the necessary supplies for the support of the blacks.¹¹⁴ The Negroes appeared more anxious for work than at any time since the war.¹¹⁵ The only areas of trouble were where levees were being built and high wages prevailed, but freedmen were apparently prevented from breaking contracts to accept this work.¹¹⁶ In April and May there was some difficulty due to the discharge of laborers for political activity, and Buchanan issued a warning that such planters would be held accountable. They would be forced to pay the stipulated wages or crop shares for the duration of the compact.¹¹⁷

The offer of the freedmen's agency to aid destitute planters with food supplies was first made on January 29, 1868. In addition to rations, transportation could be secured for men hired from a distance.¹¹⁸ There was no limit to the food offered, but employers would be charged for its transportation as well as the current price. The money due was to be secured by a mortgage on the crop or a bond of \$1,500 posted by the planters for every twenty Negroes employed. Whenever the owner could assume the responsibility, the supply would be discontinued.¹¹⁹

This offer was, on the whole, received favorably. It was considered as an interference, but a better agreement than could be secured from factors who charged a commission and insurance.¹²⁰ The chief objection was the bond required from some planters.¹²¹ To consummate the relief order, Buchanan divided the state into two districts. For each section a factor was designated to whom all crops of those who had entered the Bureau agreement had to be sent. This merchant was to have complete control, pay the government debt, and give the remainder to the owner.¹²² These stipulations were changed on September 5, and the planter allowed to sell his products to whom he wished; provided that he could pay the Bureau and his laborers before shipment was made.¹²³ A later

¹¹⁴ Official Order, in *Opelousas Courier*, February 8, 1868.

¹¹⁵ Rural Correspondence, in *New Orleans Crescent*, March 18, April 18, 1868.

¹¹⁶ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, quoted in *ibid.*, February 22, 1868.

¹¹⁷ Buchanan Circular, in *Louisiana Intelligencer*, May 20, 1868.

¹¹⁸ Buchanan Order, in *New Orleans Times*, January 29, 1868.

¹¹⁹ Official Notice, in *New Orleans Crescent*, January 29, 1868.

¹²⁰ *Opelousas Courier*, February 15, 1868; *New Orleans Times*, February 13, 1868; *New Orleans Crescent*, January 9, February 8, 1868.

¹²¹ *New Orleans Crescent*, February 18, 1868.

¹²² Buchanan Order, in *Louisiana Intelligencer*, July 22, 1868.

¹²³ Hatch Order, in *ibid.*, September 16, 1868.

order demanded only that enough of the crop be sent to the designated factors to repay the government loan. This relief was continued until the crop was sold.¹²⁴

The crops of 1868 were better than any raised since the war. The quantity of corn and grain, as well as cotton and sugar, was fully up to expectations.¹²⁵ The need for interference or aid seemed over, and by the next spring the labor system was back in the hands of the state; subject only to the supervision of the military.

The supervision of the freedmen's labor was one of the main purposes for which the Bureau was created. Its success in Louisiana was handicapped by three successive years of crop failure and disaster. Planter antipathy was strong at all times. It is impossible to estimate, therefore, the success or failure of this department of the freedmen's agency. It is interesting to note, however, that their system or regulation by contract was continued as the best means of Negro control.

CHAPTER V

BUREAU EDUCATION

One of the larger and more important phases of the Bureau's work was in the field of education. This activity was not even mentioned in the act which created the freedmen's agency.

Through over two hundred years of Negro slavery, schools for that class had been nonexistent, or, at the most, very meager. To train the minds of the blacks had been considered a useless waste of time or a positive evil. The planter desired that his slaves be docile and contented. Ignorance was, to him, a synonym of these two words. There were some educated Negroes. They were usually to be found in cities, such as New Orleans, where there was a class of free blacks with money enough to support private schools or tutors. The slave group was an illiterate mass with unknown potentialities and undetermined capabilities.

The training of such a society was not an enviable task. For several years the Bureau bore the major portion of this burden and, whether or not its efforts were considered worth-while, it should receive due credit for the assumption of this work when state and local forces were incapable and disorganized.

¹²⁴ Hatch Circular, in *ibid.*, October 17, 1868.

¹²⁵ *Annual Cyclopaedia*, VIII, 441.

Education in Louisiana had an advantage over that of most other Southern States at the end of the war. Since 1862 she had been, to a certain extent, under Union control. These forces had built up a system of teaching which, although not statewide, could easily be used as the basis for future efforts. General George Shepley had restored the educational board of the civil government, and General Benjamin Butler had tried to secure the advantages of instruction for the freedmen.¹

When General Banks assumed command of the military, he saw the need for greater efficiency in, and at the same time, a further extension of, some stable system for Negro schooling. The colored element petitioned for quick and decisive action: some had secured the rudiments of learning in the army and wanted their children to be taught; others felt that one of the sources of the white man's strength was his knowledge and hoped through instruction to rise in the social scale.²

Banks was somewhat of a pioneer in his plans. He first created a Bureau of Education.³ This agency divided the state into school districts, in each of which buildings were to be erected by the provost marshal. To defray the expenses of this system, a tax was levied on all real and personal property.⁴

The plan appeared to function well from the start. A Board of Education for freedmen was established on March 22, 1864, and Major B. Rush Plumly appointed its chairman.⁵ This board began to equip suitable buildings. Reverend J. C. Gregg, who was in New Orleans shortly after these institutions had begun operation, said that there were then nine such schools where were taught, on the average, 2,400 freedmen's children.⁶ This number rapidly increased. In early 1865 there were approximately 20,000 colored children within Union lines, of whom about 11,000 were attending classes. These schools employed 162 teachers, 130 of whom were from the South. Attendance fluctuated to some extent, but, with the tax, it was hoped stabilization could gradually be attained.⁷

¹ Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 12.

² Hooper, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 613-615.

³ Order No. 38.

⁴ *New Orleans Times*, September 17, December 27, 1865; *New York Daily Tribune*, July 25, 1865.

⁵ *New York Daily Tribune*, March 18, 1865.

⁶ J. Chandler Gregg, *Life in the Army* (Philadelphia, 1866), 206.

⁷ *New Orleans Times*, March 18, 1865.

Just previous to Bureau control of Louisiana colored schools they were visited by several Northerners who recorded their impressions of the system. One New Yorker claimed they could well stand the test of Northern standards. His attention was especially attracted to the many people over forty years of age who attended classes. He visited schools where two, and even three, generations of blacks could be found in the same room. He thought the Louisiana plan, under which almost 19,000 Negroes then received schooling, was more efficient and economical than those used in other Southern States where education was entirely in the hands of philanthropic associations.⁸ Whitelaw Reid, who was in the South at approximately the same time, was not so boundless in his enthusiasm. He rated some classes as equal to any in the North. On the other hand, he deplored the quality of much of the teaching. In a school located in a building formerly used by the Knights of the Golden Circle, Reid visited four rooms with white teachers and found only one with sufficient training for the job. A Northern instructor for the upper grades could read little better than his pupils. The other educational centers were, as a rule, better taught, though some of the buildings were in a dilapidated condition. There were black leaders as well as white. One institution, many of whose pupils had fled to the city from the Red River country, had a black principal with a white assistant. The only education under Bureau auspices with which Reid came in contact at this time was a large Sunday School in charge of Reverend Thomas Conway. The pupils were, for the most part, the same as those visited in the day schools.⁹

After the freedmen's agency had been organized and was functioning throughout the state, the army was directed to turn over to that body any schools in their charge. The Board of Education did this on July 11, 1865.¹⁰

Conway did not attempt, at first, to change the system of General Banks. He merely wished to make it more efficient and enlarge its scope.¹¹ To accomplish that purpose it was necessary that more funds be made available. Many planters had not paid the military tax. The commissioner ordered his agent to take the names of these delinquents and, if payment were not forthcoming immediately, to seize the property, or by other means, to collect

⁸ Letter, in *ibid.*, July 1, 1865.

⁹ Reid, *After the War*, 246-258.

¹⁰ *New York Daily Tribune*, August 8, 1865; Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 265.

¹¹ *Report of the Secretary of War for 1869*, p. 505.

the tax.¹² Other methods were also used to raise money. The free Negroes, who seemed to feel that their fate was tied up with that of the former slaves, held fairs and raffles to secure funds for these schools.¹³ The blacks were also asked to pay, if possible, a small tuition fee of ten to fifty cents a month.¹⁴

A short time after the transfer of education from the military, 126 schools were stated to be in operation throughout the state. They had a teaching staff of 230 and an enrollment of approximately 19,000. This number included 14,000 children, 1,000 soldiers, and 4,000 adults other than those in the army.¹⁵

In spite of statements to the contrary, it appeared that the division of educational activity progressed very slowly. The planters' traditional hostility to any such plan can partially be blamed for this situation. One source stated that the attempt to provide schooling for blacks excited more hostility in Louisiana than had Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.¹⁶ Conway stated that institutions in the city were protected by the army forces, but those in rural sections, according to a "multitude of witnesses," were subject to a great deal of harsh treatment. Much of this was in the form of petty annoyances. "Often they have refused to board the teachers, to sell them anything at the stores, or to do them the slightest favor; sometimes they threatened to mob them and often circulated the most infamous reports about their character." The agents were ordered to watch these affairs closely. Any attempted interruption of Bureau activity was to be followed immediately by the arrest and punishment of the guilty party.¹⁷ In spite of this passive resistance rural education progressed. Vacant buildings were equipped with benches and books, a teacher secured, and classes begun.¹⁸ General Strong reported that the Red River country had many fine schools. It was estimated that 20,000 children in rural areas received some instruction during 1865.¹⁹

Louisiana freedmen's schools were of several types: some were operated entirely by the Bureau; some were supported partly by Northern benevolence; others were under the auspices

¹² Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 14.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 265.

¹⁵ *New York Daily Tribune*, July 25, 1865.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Conway Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, July 17, 1865.

¹⁸ *New York Daily Tribune*, July 25, 1865.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, September 9, 1865; *New York Herald*, September 13, 1865.

of local societies and churches; and still others were private schools.²⁰ When J. T. Trowbridge asked the superintendent about these educational plants, he was told:²¹

From the infant which must learn to count its fingers, to the scholar who can read and understand blank-verse, we have grades and departments adapted and free to all. Examinations, promotions, are had at stated seasons. The city is divided into districts; each district has its school, and each school the several departments of primary, intermediate, and grammar. A principal is appointed to each school, with the requisite number of assistants. Our teachers are mostly from the North, with a few southerners, who have heroically dared the storm of prejudice to do good and right. The normal method of teaching is adopted, and object teaching is a specialty.

Union soldiers were hired on some plantations to act as teacher and overseer.²² Salaries were paid by the government or from Northern funds. They ranged from forty to eighty dollars a month. This wage was supplemented in various ways: till the latter part of 1865 teachers were transported to and from their jobs by the government; after 1865 they travelled at reduced rates; they could either buy their food at cost price from the Bureau store or receive five dollars more salary per month; homes were even provided in some cases.²³

Conway continued the Board of Education system until the latter part of 1865. He then changed to a system of state and district superintendents with headquarters in the "Plantation Department" of the Bureau. He thought that this step would bring about a closer unity of the schools and a greater economy in their operation.²⁴

Since 1864, Negro instruction in Louisiana had been, in part, supported by a tax on property and crops. Each district received the tax collected in that area.²⁵ Confiscated or abandoned land was not subject to this levy, but land rented from the government was taxable.²⁶ During 1865 the money collected

²⁰ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 271; *Shreveport News*, quoted in *New Orleans Times*, September 3, 1865.

²¹ Trowbridge, *A Picture of the Desolated States*, 410.

²² *New York Daily Tribune*, July 25, 1865; W. R. Stickney, in *New Orleans Times*, July 27, 1865.

²³ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 257, 258, 275; Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, pp. 18, 19.

²⁴ *New Orleans Times*, August 19, 1865; Williams, *The History of the Negro Race*, II, 394.

²⁵ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 38.

²⁶ Fullerton Order, in *New Orleans Times*, November 5, 1865.

from this source amounted to between thirty and forty thousand dollars. The people paid very unwillingly and tried at various times to have the tax removed.²⁷ On November 7, 1865, General Fullerton acceded to their requests. He stopped all further collections and ordered the tax rolls to be sent to headquarters.²⁸ The money already paid was not to be returned. The planters thought this was placing a premium on dishonesty.²⁹

When General Baird took charge of freedmen's affairs in Louisiana, Howard ordered him to resume the collection of the evaded payment.³⁰ The Louisiana Legislature, thereupon sent a joint resolution to President Johnson. The President had thought the tax discontinued and immediately had the Secretary of War suspend it.³¹

The Louisiana system of education supported entirely by the Bureau at the time Fullerton suspended the tax is shown in the following table:³²

<i>Unit or Agent</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Total Salaries per Month</i>
Schools	141	
Scholars	19,000	
Directors	12	\$1,225
Special Agents	3	200
Clerks	5	470
Principals	12	1,350
1st Assistants	28	2,080
2nd Assistants.....	30	2,070
Primary Teachers	89	5,340
City Sup't of New Orleans....	1	150
Acting Ass't Superintendent	1	100
Board of Examiners.....	2	5 a day
Janitors	8	10 to 25
Total Cost of Schools.....	\$17,000 to \$20,000 a month	

²⁷ Petition, in *ibid.*, September 17, 1865; Schurz Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 26.

²⁸ Fullerton Order, in *New Orleans Price-Current*, November 11, 1865.

²⁹ *New Orleans Times*, December 1, 1865.

³⁰ Howard Letter, in *New Orleans Times*, January 23, 1866.

³¹ *New Orleans Southern Star*, March 24, 1866; West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter, April 21, 1866.

³² Fullerton Report, in *New York Times*, December 31, 1865.

The Louisiana system for Negro schooling was considered the most inclusive and efficient plan in the South previous to 1866.³³ In New Orleans alone during the two-year period the schools had been in existence, an estimated 50,000 Negroes had been taught to read. In the country parishes there was a building in almost every district.³⁴ It was feared, however, that education existed only because of the army's presence and would be forced to suspend operations if the soldiers were removed.³⁵

In December, 1865, General Baird saw that the Louisiana system would have to be drastically altered. A big source of revenue had been eliminated with the suspension of the property tax. Another producer of school funds, the rent of abandoned land, had dwindled to an alarming degree. In Orleans Parish alone it had dropped from \$8,000 in October to \$1,500 in November. This was due to Johnson's order that property be restored to pardoned Confederates.³⁶ The operating cost of schools had, meanwhile, risen. For December it amounted to \$20,688.91.³⁷ Bureau funds were being speedily exhausted, and it seemed but a matter of days before all institutions would be forced to close.

The lower-class Negroes strongly opposed the discontinuation of Bureau education. A petition said to represent 10,000 freedmen was sent to General Canby. It advocated a Negro tax to supplant the one suspended by Fullerton.³⁸ The wealthier blacks wanted no additional tax levy as they were already paying \$40,000 a year toward the support of white schools.³⁹

General Baird believed that colored people who wished education should be willing to pay for it.⁴⁰ He, therefore, worked out a plan whereby freedmen in rural areas would support their own schools. An educational stipulation was to be incorporated into all contracts. Where Negroes worked on shares, one-twentieth of the share was to be donated for child training; where they worked for wages, five per cent was to be deducted by the planter for Bureau use.⁴¹ This system naturally took some time to produce results. Baird was forced, therefore, to issue an order on

³³ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 273; Alvord Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. II, p. 112.

³⁴ Alvord Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. II, p. 111.

³⁵ Schurz Report, in *ibid.*, No. 2, p. 25.

³⁶ Trowbridge, *Picture of the Desolated States*, 410.

³⁷ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 74.

³⁸ Alvord Report, in *ibid.*, 1 Sess., Pt. II, p. 112.

³⁹ *New York Times*, December 31, 1865.

⁴⁰ *New Orleans Times*, February 19, 1866.

⁴¹ Baird Order, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 16, 1865.

December 27, 1865, for school suspension, to go into effect on January 31.⁴² He hoped the enforced vacation would be of short duration but did not expect that the new arrangement would be as extensive as the old. The Bureau was \$40,000 in arrears on teachers' salaries alone. This precluded any thought of expansion for some time.⁴³ It was believed that enough money would have accumulated by the first of March to reopen the rural buildings.⁴⁴ These would be restricted in number according to the Negro's willingness to pay the tax. If a group of laborers refused to pay, they would be left without a school. Money collected would be used only for the local institution. This meant that plantations with a small labor force would find it difficult to get educational advantages. The Bureau would attempt to pay all expenses but the teachers' salaries out of the general fund. These teachers should, if possible, be older women who could be hired at cheap rates. Parish agents of the freedmen's agency should decide all the details of the plan.⁴⁵

The reopening of city schools presented a more difficult problem. Formerly, they had been free institutions in which all material had been furnished and attendance almost compulsory.⁴⁶ To make them self-supporting it was necessary to evolve a plan whereby the Bureau would not be left to pay all expenses in case of freedmen's negligence. The system was finally begun on a tuition basis. Tickets were sold to pay the teachers' salary. Instructors were hired in proportion to the number of tickets sold. After the amount paid exceeded a set salary, the excess was used to educate the children of the poor. Few schools could exist, therefore, except where the freedmen could contribute toward their support.⁴⁷

During the first months of the new plan's operation out-state schools decreased in numbers and also in size. Travelling agents were sent to various parts of the state to organize support, but their efforts appeared to do little good.⁴⁸ In rural areas planter opposition was strong and the Negroes seemed apathetic. The blacks favored schooling but opposed the tax. Those without

⁴² Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 74.

⁴³ Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Tribune*, March 7, 1866.

⁴⁴ Alvord Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. II, p. 113.

⁴⁵ Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Tribune*, March 7, 1866.

⁴⁶ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 74.

⁴⁷ Howard Investigation, in *Reports of Committees*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 121, p. 22; Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Tribune*, March 7, 1866.

⁴⁸ *Natchitoches Times*, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 1, 1866.

children complained ceaselessly about its cost.⁴⁹ The arrangement was then modified: buildings were opened only where a large enough group favored the plan; no tax was levied where there was no educational plant; laborers who had no children taught were not assessed. The effect of this ruling was immediately apparent. Few colored people paid, and teaching decreased rapidly in rural sections.⁵⁰

The town tuition system had also an unsuccessful beginning. Elementary, industrial, and the normal school alike suffered from neglect.⁵¹ The tuition charges ranged from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per month and many could not, or would not, pay it. As many teachers depended entirely upon this fee for their salaries, they were forced to resign their positions or work for less than decent living expenses. Many received but eight or ten dollars a month.⁵²

In April, 1866, the Quartermaster's Department relieved the Louisiana Division of Education of most of an \$80,000 debt. At the same time both planters and laborers showed an increased desire for freedmen's instruction. The Bureau hoped, if the interest continued, that the system could be built up to its former size.⁵³ Recovery was slow, however, and by the first of June there were only 62 schools in operation, with 74 teachers and 3,000 pupils.⁵⁴

The revival of interest was but momentary. During the summer the combination of flood, disease, New Orleans massacre, and the picking season, resulted in conditions as bad as in the early part of the year.⁵⁵ Planters and laborers attempted to evade the tax because of poverty, and parish agents were sometimes forced to visit each plantation to attempt collection.⁵⁶ Antipathy to schools was shown in several outbursts of violence. At Jackson, a colored teacher was shot and his school closed. Many similar cases were reported from the remote farm parishes.⁵⁷

General Sheridan reported in October, 1866, that the schools had again begun to expand. In the sections most affected by crop failure they were not progressing, but in other areas a school

⁴⁹ West Baton Rouge *Sugar Planter*, October 6, 1866.

⁵⁰ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 75.

⁵¹ Alvord Report, in *ibid.*, 1 Sess., Pt. II, p. 113.

⁵² Howard Report, in *ibid.*, 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 75.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ "Editorial Department," *DeBow's Review*, A.W.S., III (1867), 332.

⁵⁵ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1028.

⁵⁶ West Baton Rouge *Sugar Planter*, July 7, 1866.

⁵⁷ *New Orleans Tribune*, July 19, 1866.

building was being opened on almost every plantation. In the cities the work was also going forward. The New Orleans Normal was considered one of the finest institutions under Bureau care. Two new elementary schools were also opened in that city. These buildings were supported almost entirely by tuition and government funds. Sheridan said, "very little, if any, aid has been given to schools in this state by benevolent associations at the North. It is not known that one dollar has been expended in this way during the past year, notwithstanding the repeated protestations of willingness, and the apparent interference with the school department here, on the part of certain associations at the North." The obstacles still to be overcome were: the unwillingness of laborers to give part of their earnings toward education; the distrust of planters in any project for Negro learning; and the inability of the Bureau to furnish sufficient property and books.⁵⁸

By the latter part of 1866 citizens were making a determined effort to have the state take charge of black education in New Orleans.⁵⁹ The freedmen were said to have paid \$84,000 in taxes during that year, and many people thought they deserved some of the benefits of free education such as the whites received.⁶⁰ Another, and, perhaps, more important reason for this desire was the fear that Bureau teachers were prejudicing the minds of the blacks against the whites.⁶¹ This agitation for state control increased during 1867 somewhat through fear that the freedmen's agency would change to mixed institutions. It had one of these schools in operation,⁶² and it was expected that others might also be opened for both races. State leaders felt that mixed schools were not wanted by the colored people (except mulattoes and politicians), and had proven a failure in practice.⁶³ In mid-September this desire culminated in affirmative action by the city school board. It decided that Negro institutions could become part of the free public system. It planned to open sixteen schools of four rooms each, with separate buildings not only for the two races but also for the two sexes. The schools opened and grew rapidly. Most of the teachers were white.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 76.

⁵⁹ *New Orleans Crescent*, December 8, 1866.

⁶⁰ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 683.

⁶¹ *New Orleans Crescent*, January 28, March 21, 1867.

⁶² The Franklin Institute for both races was opened on September 2, 1866. Of the hundred odd pupils there were about half of each race. The whites were usually French or Italian. The plan had not worked too well. The children fought even after being placed in separate rooms.

⁶³ *New Orleans Crescent*, September 15, 17, 1867.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, September 22, October 3, 13, 18, 1867.

General Mower was well satisfied with the action of the city board. He declined to interfere with the plans, or accede to the wishes of the radicals, and decided to transfer all Bureau schools to the city.⁶⁵ On November 15, 1867, he issued an order to that effect. All abandoned buildings in use for schools were to be sold or returned to their owners. Those held under lease were to be transferred to the city. This action affected some fourteen schools. These pupils, with those already under Louisiana jurisdiction, brought Negro free school enrollment to about 1,500 pupils. This number increased to over 2,000 by December.⁶⁶

The freedmen's institutions released into city care were as follows:⁶⁷

<i>School</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>How Supported</i>
Soulé Chapel.....	98	\$1 to \$2 tuition per month; very little Bureau support.
Republican	50	\$2 to \$3 tuition per month; Bureau supervision.
Louisiana Relief.....	70	Supported by Louisiana Relief Association; Bureau paid rent and books.
Franklin Institute.....	95 day 20 night	Tuition and Bureau supervision.
.....	few	A free school supported by the G. A. R.
Lincoln	35	\$1.50 tuition per month; rest paid by Bureau.
Southern Church.....	68	\$1.50 tuition per month; Bureau paid rent, but sold books at cost.
Dana Exchange	68	\$1.50 tuition; Bureau paid half the rent and sold books at cost.
Baptist	65	Run by church board; little Bureau aid.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, October 18, 20, 26, 27, 1867.

⁶⁶ Address, in *New Orleans Times*, December 25, 1867; *New Orleans Crescent*, November 17, 1867.

⁶⁷ Local Intelligence, in *New Orleans Crescent*, September 15, 17, 1867.

Conway	45	Tuition \$1.50; Bureau furnished the rest.
General Mower.....	140	A free school; supported by a Bureau fund.
General Howard.....	25	Tuition \$1.50; Bureau paid for building and books.
Eagle	70	A free school; supported by a Bureau fund.

Rural schools increased rapidly during 1867. In some areas they could be found on almost every plantation.⁶⁸ In the first half of the year the Bureau spent \$14,391.09 toward the expense of these institutions.⁶⁹ In the southern and western parts of the state where planter antipathy was strongest, it was almost impossible to establish places of learning. It was reported from St. James Parish that the numerous schools established there in 1866 had all disappeared by the following year.⁷⁰ Negro education flourished in the rest of the state. Agents visited the schools and reported improvements from time to time. These inspectors also checked on all nonschool children between the ages of six and twenty-one and attempted to secure their enrollment. In addition to the regular classes many older groups met at night for instruction.⁷¹ By October, 1867, General Mower reported that 246 schools, with an attendance of 8,435, were operating in Louisiana under Bureau supervision.⁷² These institutions received about half their support from the freedmen. They also were given help by voluntary contributions solicited by various agents and from fees collected under the homestead law.⁷³

The number of educational units remained about constant in early 1868, though they increased somewhat in size. By May there were 217 buildings with 244 teachers and 10,971 pupils. The proportion of blacks of school age in the state who received instruction was, thus, approximately one in seven. Most of these institutions had three months' vacations, as unacclimated teachers

⁶⁸ Letter from Point Jefferson, in *ibid.*, June 12, 1867.

⁶⁹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 653.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 683; "Editorial Department," *DeBow's Review*, A.W.S., III (1867), 333.

⁷¹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, pp. 651, 683.

⁷² Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 342.

⁷³ Advertisement, in *Ouachita Telegraph*, June 13, 1867; *St. Landry Progress*, August 10, 1867.

were not allowed to work during the hot season. There were many, however, which had short vacations⁷⁴ and some which had none at all.⁷⁵

The process of Negro enfranchisement crippled the schools for some time. Freedmen joined political clubs and spent much of their time and money on this new attraction. They neglected education and also their jobs. This aroused the planters' ire. They blamed the Bureau for the attitude of the blacks and did all they could to discredit the schools.⁷⁶ When an instructor in Lafourche was sent to prison for a year, they called the entire system a nest of criminals.⁷⁷ Much of their action was, however, more coercive. A teacher in Opelousas was warned to close his school or suffer death.⁷⁸ An instructor in Ouachita was killed, and one in Winn parish disappeared. The schools in St. Mary, Sabine, Rapides, Washington, Franklin, Ouachita, and St. Landry parishes were forced to close. The teachers were forced to leave or the freedmen were afraid to attend.⁷⁹

In spite of the opposition the educational work continued. During the year 1868 the freedmen's agency spent \$14,610.84 for instructional support, and donated 115 buildings for schools which became self-supporting during that period. At the beginning of the next year they had control of 216 schools with 259 teachers and 12,309 scholars.⁸⁰ In June, 1869, the Louisiana freedmen's schools in their entirety consisted of:⁸¹

Day and Night	404	Teachers	.....	467	Pupils	.....	17,280
Sabbath	.....	136	Teachers	....	266	Pupils	.....
High Schools	....	2	Teachers	.....	.....	Pupils	.....
							250

During 1869 and 1870 the Bureau did a great deal to help build up a system of Negro colleges within the state: they bought \$12,000 worth of property to begin a school called the "Union

⁷⁴ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, pp. 1028, 1031, 1051.

⁷⁵ Hooper says that 178 schools remained open all summer. This figure would appear somewhat high.

⁷⁶ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, pp. 1028, 1051.

⁷⁷ *Ouachita Telegraph*, January 9, 1868.

⁷⁸ *St. Landry Progress*, September 5, 1868.

⁷⁹ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 377-388.

⁸⁰ *Report of Commissioner of Education for 1870*, p. 150.

⁸¹ *Report of the Secretary of War for 1869*, p. 518.

Normal School of New Orleans" (later New Orleans University); they made several donations to Leland University; they gave, in a period of two years, \$18,927 to Staight University.⁸²

Although its other functions had been discontinued, the Bureau continued its educational work in 1870. The state was divided into two parts with a superintendent at New Orleans and at Shreveport. The work had, however, begun to languish due to the violent antipathy of the planter class. In New Orleans the free public school system took care of Negroes, but in the rest of the state feeling against the schools became too strong for teachers or pupils to combat. By the middle of the year education for the colored in rural areas had become practically non-existent.⁸³

CHAPTER VI

LAND, SHARE CROPPING, HOME COLONIES, AND HOMESTEADING

At the time the Freedmen's Bureau was legislated into existence, the greater proportion of abandoned or confiscated lands was held by agents of the Treasury Department. They had been zealous in its seizure; in fact, many people thought they took property with too little regard for the laws which gave them the rights of possession.¹ These laws defined that class of property as follows: land was abandoned if its owner was gone and was fighting for the Confederacy or aiding it;² land was confiscated if its owner was an officer in the Confederate army, navy, national, or state government.³

The act of March 3, 1865, gave the freedmen's agency control of all abandoned and confiscated property not used for military purposes. In conformance with this law the Secretary of the Treasury ordered a transfer of all such estates on June 27 of that year.⁴ The Louisiana head of that department then conveyed to Conway some eighty plantations. Included in that number were some of the finest sugar plantations in the state.⁵

The purpose for government control of seized lands was to rent or sell it to the freedmen. To carry out this aim more

⁸² *Report of Commissioner of Education for 1874*, p. 151; Howard Investigation, in *Reports of Committees*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 121, p. 30.

⁸³ Alvord Testimony, in *Reports of Committees*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 121, p. 402; *Report of Commissioner of Education for 1870*, p. 62.

¹ Hugh McCulloch, *Men and Measures of Half a Century* (New York, 1883), 235.

² Act of July 2, 1864, in *Congressional Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., Pt. IV, Appen., 256.

³ Act of July 17, 1862, in *ibid.*, 37 Cong., 2 Sess., Pt. IV, Appen., 412.

⁴ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 3.

⁵ *New York Daily Tribune*, July 19, 1865.

efficiently, Conway established the "Plantation Department" and gave control to it over land, labor, and relief.⁶ It ordered that sequestered property should be divided into forty-acre plots and leased to Negroes or whites for three years at six per cent rental. The land to which the government had the best title was to be distributed first.⁷ In order to rent a tract of this land the prospective lessee had to fill out two forms. The first required a knowledge of: the size of the family group, the size of the desired ground, the amount of cash on hand for rent payment, the kind of crop to be raised, the location of the wanted land, and, if a refugee, a proof of his status.⁸ The second form demanded: that renters possess, or have access to, sufficient funds for the common costs of farm management, that they own, or could obtain, the necessary implements and animals, and that they first submit the other form.⁹ These applications were to be completed before January 1, 1866.¹⁰

After the Bureau land plan went into effect, it began to produce a revenue. During the year 1865 more money was realized from this source in Louisiana than in any other Southern State.¹¹ The usual terms of lease were cash on a monthly basis for town property or a share, ranging from one-tenth to one-twentieth, of the crop.¹² By December, some 62,528 acres had been placed in cultivation in this manner.¹³

The experiment of Negro farming under government supervision did not continue for a sufficient period to show its feasibility. Many of the results, however, were none too favorable. In order to secure immediate funds, many freedmen neglected crops and cut wood for sale. This happened to such an extent that Fullerton was forced to prohibit all chopping of timber except that needed for home consumption.¹⁴ One Negro manager of a plantation leased entirely by colored families was disgusted at their laziness. He said they felt independence meant doing as they wished. They, therefore, worked but a few hours daily and, according to this overseer's testimony, would not have produced

⁶ Conway Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, July 23, 1865.

⁷ Conway Order, in *New Orleans Tribune*, August 16, 1865.

⁸ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 19.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁰ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 3, 1865.

¹¹ *New York Daily Tribune*, December 21, 1865.

¹² Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 4.

¹³ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 231.

¹⁴ Fullerton Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, October 20, 1865.

enough during the year to support life if their larder had not been augmented by theft.¹⁵ While Reid was in Louisiana, he visited the Richard Taylor plantation which had also been leased to a large group of freedmen. He found the place in a dirty, ill-kept condition. The work was poorly done or neglected, as almost everyone wished to be the boss. This group did earn a small sum from their crops, but, with the high prices paid for cotton in 1865, it showed a lack of desire for work.¹⁶ The "Freedmen's Aid Association" attempted to increase that desire by giving premiums for perseverance. It donated \$250 to the person raising the largest crop, \$25 for the best looking work animals, and \$25 apiece for the best samples of cotton, sugar, or tobacco.¹⁷

President Johnson soon corrected the Bureau of the idea that the blacks would be given large quantities of land at the expense of former Confederates. He ordered that people who received a pardon be given back their property unless the government had full title to it.¹⁸ This title could not be secured until the land had been confiscated, condemned, and sold by a United States court.¹⁹ As this process had been completed in a few cases, and the President pardoned large numbers, the supply of property dwindled rapidly.²⁰ In New Orleans alone, of the 501 pieces of estate under agency control, 136 worth \$800,000 had been returned before the close of 1865.²¹ These possessions were not, however, restored instantaneously when a pardon was granted. A board of supervisors first had to approve that step. They required an agreement which assured the Negroes on the property at that time of fair treatment.²² This action was necessary as owners attempted to force payment for back rent or for damages. This rent was payable to the government and planters were forced to take up all claims with that body.²³

The belief of the colored people that the government was to make a general land division was held in every part of the state.

¹⁵ Reid, *After the War*, 462.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 269, 270.

¹⁷ *New Orleans Tribune*, August 16, 1865.

¹⁸ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 19, pp. 1, 2.

¹⁹ Howard Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, September 23, 1865.

²⁰ *New Orleans Times*, August 19, 1865.

²¹ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 231; Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 5.

²² *Ibid.*, 9, 10.

²³ Canby Order, in *New York Daily Tribune*, September 19, 1865.

The frank denials of officials helped correct this misconception, and the return of government-held property in large quantities was also a factor in correcting this idea.²⁴

The rules under which agents controlled seized property were very exact. Each parish officer had to arrange all property alphabetically according to owner.²⁵ A report was demanded monthly which listed all losses by restitution or additions through seizure for nonpayment of taxes or otherwise.²⁶ Officials should not invest in land under threat of dismissal, and should transfer all private property to headquarters where it was sold at public auction.²⁷

On September 30, 1866, the work of the "Plantation Department" was merged with the Quartermaster's duties, as most of the land had been returned to the old owners.²⁸ At that time the Negro agency had possession of 10,600 acres of country land and approximately 332 pieces of town property.²⁹ One year later this amount had dropped to 3,690 acres and 325 parcels of city property.³⁰ From that time forward till the close of the Bureau land activity, the decline in the amount held was very gradual. In October, 1868, there were 3,040 acres of rural estate and 321 town properties still in that agency's possession.³¹ The reason for the slight change during 1868 may have been caused by several factors: the land to which the government had least title was gone, and the rest, in spite of court orders, was relinquished very slowly;³² also, many owners had resettled on their plantations without permission and were to be dispossessed on January 1, 1868, unless their property was returned to them legally before that time.³³

As the time of dissolution approached for various Bureau functions, it was ordered that abandoned lands be returned to the owners. This was done if the owner could be found. The remainder was either sold or transferred to the military.³⁴

²⁴ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, pp. 6-12; Conway Order, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 15, 1865.

²⁵ Howard Order, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 13, 1865.

²⁶ Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 17, 1866; Conway Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, July 20, 1865.

²⁷ Advertisement, in *New Orleans Tribune*, June 17, 1866; Washington Dispatch, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 22, 1866.

²⁸ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 69.

²⁹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 622.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1017.

³² *New Orleans Crescent*, October 18 1867.

³³ *Ibid.*, November 10, 1867; Grant Circular, in *Opelousas Courier*, November 16, 1867.

³⁴ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 360, 361.

After the war the condition of land in Louisiana was not as bad as in some of the other Southern States, as large areas had been untouched by troops. In certain sections, however, such as along the Mississippi or Red rivers, or in the southern parishes of St. Martin, St. Mary, Vermilion, or Terrebonne, the country was badly devastated. Much of the land had lain idle and was covered with weeds; most seed cane was gone and with a collapsed system of credit more could not be obtained; and there was a lack or shortage of animals, implements, and laborers.³⁵ Then, too, the season was well advanced before many planters returned home. The first year was thus a period of privation and small crops.³⁶

Many of the planters who returned to find that nothing had been left to them but the land itself were in a confused state of mind. Those without the necessary recuperative energy sold or leased their plantations. Others made the best of their conditions and began to rebuild.³⁷ Many Northerners bought or leased these plantations. Truman said that there were large numbers of such places along both the Mississippi and Red rivers on some of which Federal and Confederate officers were in partnership.³⁸ Reid claimed that in early 1865 land along the Mississippi was being leased for \$7 an acre, but that by the end of the year the price had risen to \$12 and \$14 an acre and few people would risk that amount of capital.³⁹ The years 1866 and 1867 brought disappointment and loss to many people. During the latter year especially, the newspapers were replete with advertisements of land sales or mortgage foreclosures. Northern speculators bought some of these plantations and Bureau officers were also accused of engaging in property speculation.⁴⁰ Latham said that along the Bayou Teche estates formerly worth \$100 an acre were selling for \$15 and \$20 an acre, and along the Mississippi the sale price was less than half the land's value. He noted, however, that due to the labor shortage many of these new owners were realizing very little on their investments.⁴¹

During the first year following the war it was estimated that approximately one fifth of the cultivatable land was in use.⁴²

³⁵ Latham, *Black and White*, 170; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 6, 1865.

³⁶ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 13, 1865.

³⁷ Trowbridge, *Picture of the Desolated States*, 400, 402.

³⁸ Truman Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 43, p. 7.

³⁹ Reid, *After the War*, 414.

⁴⁰ *New Orleans Times*, March 24, 1868.

⁴¹ Latham, *Black and White*, 153, 166, 177, 272.

⁴² *New York Times*, December 31, 1865; Truman Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 43, p. 14.

There was also a large shortage of capital⁴³ and labor and many planters were, therefore, forced to replace cotton with corn and contract with laborers for a share of the crop.⁴⁴ Many owners also rented their land in small tracts on a crop-share basis. At Jesuit Bend in Plaquemines Parish and also near the mouth of Red River, groups of freedmen leased land in this way.⁴⁵ The rate of share ranged from one-half to one-seventh of the crop with the owner furnishing homes, implements, and medical care.⁴⁶ Opinions as to the success of the system varied. Trowbridge claimed the Negroes were happier and worked better on their own land and cited one planter who claimed a freedman with three children had raised twenty-five bales of cotton that year.⁴⁷ General William Strong echoed this sentiment and said the size of crops raised by blacks along the Red River amazed him.⁴⁸ Reid was more adverse in his opinions. He thought the Negroes would steal more from the owner than they raised on their own land.⁴⁹

The land rent system continued in use during 1866, although planters, on the whole, did not appear to like it and only tolerated its use because of necessity. The stipulation for half-acre gardens in Baird's contract plan was especially disliked. The *Picayune* stated that the same idea had been a source of much trouble during the time of slavery and advocated a requirement in contracts for a certain amount of vegetables.⁵⁰ In some sections, however, it was believed that freedmen worked better when they received part of the crop,⁵¹ and one planter in St. James thought that renting an acre of garden land to each family was an economy.⁵² Nevertheless, whether liked or not, to avoid a large outlay of capital or letting their land lie idle, many planters rented it entirely or in part to Negroes.⁵³ The size of the shares varied. Some planters furnished land, tools, houses, and animals, and gave one-half of the crop.⁵⁴ Others gave a smaller share. One

⁴³ New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 7, 1865.

⁴⁴ Ibid., July 1, 1865; New Orleans Times, July 27, 1865.

⁴⁵ New York Daily Tribune, July 26, 1865; New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 31, 1865.

⁴⁶ Trowbridge, *Picture of the Desolated States*, 392, 393.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 392, 409, 410.

⁴⁸ New York Herald, September 13, 1865.

⁴⁹ Reid, *After the War*, 269, 270.

⁵⁰ New Orleans Daily Picayune, December 21, 1865.

⁵¹ Opelousas Letter, in *ibid.*, May 20, 1866.

⁵² Latham, *Black and White*, 167.

⁵³ Terrebonne Civic Guard, quoted in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 20, 1866; St. Martinville Courier, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 10, 1866.

⁵⁴ St. Martinville Courier, quoted in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 10, 1866.

Negro, when asked how much he had earned in 1866, replied: "Nuffin. I worked for de seventh and de boss only made a fifth, darfore I got nuffin."⁵⁵

The Bureau supervised share cropping as well as wage contracts. Officials had some difficulty with the share system as some planters defrauded their men by giving either a smaller share than the agreement called for or by charging outrageous prices for food and other articles. Mower ordered that agents should check these contracts carefully and see that freedmen received the crop and not the proceeds from the crop. The agent would sell the Negroes' share for them unless the planter furnished a bond for honesty.⁵⁶

The effectiveness of the crop-share system was a point of dispute as long as the freedmen's agency was in existence. Many Negroes liked a cash wage better than a portion of the product;⁵⁷ others gave better service when they had a piece of land to cultivate for part of the produce.⁵⁸ Planters seemed, for the most part, against the plan. They claimed the blacks refused to pay rent or else were too lazy to make it a paying proposition.⁵⁹ In one parish it was decided in 1868 that no rent or lease system would be used in the future.⁶⁰

When the Negro department began, it was thought homesteading could take place on an extensive scale. The people were too poor, however, to take full advantage of the law, and Howard wished aid to be extended them in "transportation, temporary food and shelter, and implements of husbandry."⁶¹ The President's plan necessitated the return of so much land that the idea was never brought to fruition.⁶² Agitation for a law to open public lands to worthy blacks and whites was continued, though it was admitted that except for railroad holdings there was little good public land in the state.⁶³

On June 21, 1866, Congress passed a Homestead Law for both races, and J. J. Seville was assigned to the Bureau in Loui-

⁵⁵ *Natchitoches Times*, quoted in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 12, 1867.

⁵⁶ Mower Circular, in *St. Landry Progress*, November 2, 1867.

⁵⁷ *Shreveport News*, quoted in *New Orleans Crescent*, January 15, 1867.

⁵⁸ *Opelousas Courier*, July 6, 1867.

⁵⁹ *New Orleans Times*, February 12, 1868; *West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter*, September 29, 1866; *Franklin Banner*, quoted in *New Orleans Crescent*, January 23, 1867.

⁶⁰ *Franklin Banner*, quoted in *New Orleans Crescent*, December 16, 1868.

⁶¹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 34.

⁶² Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 243.

⁶³ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 21, 1866.

siana to take charge of that function.⁶⁴ This law allowed all freedmen or whites who were over twenty-one years of age and had not fought for the Confederacy to get eighty acres of land. An initial fee of five dollars had to be paid plus the cost of locating and surveying the property. If residence were established and the ground cultivated for a period of five years full title could be obtained by the payment of an additional five dollars. This offer was valid until January 1, 1867.⁶⁵ Freedmen were urged, if they had money saved, to take advantage of this law, and, if without funds, to economize for the future. They were asked to band into groups of not less than ten families and form colonies so that there could be a school and a church. The Bureau agent was to take care of all details.⁶⁶ The plan did not appear to be very successful. Sheridan said that there were many freedmen with funds necessary for the purpose but there was a lack of decent land owned by the government.⁶⁷ The fees charged might also have prevented some from acquiring properties. One Republican paper claimed surveyors charged up to thirty-two dollars for measuring the tracts.⁶⁸

The "Home Colonies" were begun under General Banks as poor farms for the destitute and disabled. He ordered one to be established in Jefferson and one in East Baton Rouge Parish.⁶⁹ Conway, as head of the "Bureau of Free Labor," was given charge over these plantations. The people were forced to labor in a state bordering on slavery at first, but this was soon changed to a system of fixed wages.⁷⁰

Under Conway as Bureau assistant commissioner the number of these colonies increased to four: "The McHatton at Baton Rouge, the Rost in St. Charles parish, the General Bragg in Lafourche Parish, and the Sparks in Jefferson Parish." Each of these colonies had a general manager or superintendent, a doctor, a clerk, and an overseer of cultivation. There was a school and Sunday School, and there could be a church.⁷¹

The reports of the first year's activity on these colonies conflicted. Conway stated that there were 1,902 Negroes on these

⁶⁴ Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Price-Current*, August 1, 1866.

⁶⁵ Howard Order, in *New Orleans Price-Current*, August 1, 1866.

⁶⁶ Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Tribune*, January 19, 1867.

⁶⁷ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 72.

⁶⁸ *St. Landry Progress*, August 10, 1867.

⁶⁹ *Annual Cyclopaedia*, III, 595.

⁷⁰ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 186.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*; Ficklen, *Reconstruction in Louisiana*, 135, 136.

projects, of whom 609 were sick or disabled. These men had 9,650 acres of land under cultivation and had raised products worth approximately \$175,000 in 1865.⁷² Howard's report stated, however, that these colonies were not fully self-supporting.⁷³ The best explanation for that discrepancy appears to be that the colony was the home of the sick and disabled, and each had a farm in connection worked by able-bodied freedmen. The farm, however, was a separate unit⁷⁴ which was not allowed to sell food or vegetables in excess of the needs of the colony. This surplus was used for the relief of the destitute.⁷⁵

The idea of Negro government farms was not liked. The *Picayune* contended that they were poorly run and made vagrants of the Negroes. The colonies were also accused of spreading contagious diseases.⁷⁶

When Fullerton became chief state official of the freedmen's agency, he sent an officer to inspect each colony. These agents reported that there were four colonies supervised by Bureau military officers with civilian aides. There were "391 infirm adults and 389 children" inmates on all four. These institutions were located on plantations worked by healthy freedmen who would make a slight profit on one place but who operated at a loss on the other three. There was a lack of medicines and the death rate was high. Fullerton understood that all but one of these plantations were soon to be returned to their owners. He, therefore, broke up the projects, moved all the infirm to Judge Pierre A. Rost's plantation and discharged all the unnecessary employees.⁷⁷

The colony project continued under Baird's supervision. The plantation was, however, to be returned to Judge Rost. To avoid this predicament, the place was rented from him for the year 1866. During that year approximately 711 Negroes were kept there without expense to the government. In fact, almost \$20,000 was cleared on this colony during the year. The project was discontinued at the end of that period.⁷⁸

⁷² New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, October 11, 1865; *New York Daily Tribune*, October 24, 1865.

⁷³ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, p. 29.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 242.

⁷⁵ Conway Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, July 17, 1865.

⁷⁶ New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, October 11, 1865, February 9, 1866.

⁷⁷ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 396; Fullerton Report, in *New York Times*, December 31, 1865.

⁷⁸ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, p. 82.

The Bureau division of land did not have a very successful existence. Although many freedmen were aided in securing a place of their own, the policy of pardon soon ruined all plans. The "Home Colony" projects suffered a like fate.

CHAPTER VII

JUSTICE, FINANCES, AND CONCLUSIONS

After the capture of New Orleans, General Butler was personally a type of court. The judicial functions of the state were paralyzed and the number of cases were too great for him and his officers to handle, so provost courts were established to take charge of this branch of government. Under Governor George Shepley the power of these organizations was limited to criminal cases, and regular district courts were re-established in Orleans Parish. For the state at large a Provisional Court came from the North and took charge of matters civil and criminal. Both blacks and whites were tried in these courts. As Union control spread over the state, the parish courts were revived and placed in the care of men loyal to the Northern cause.¹

At its inception the Bureau proceeded on the assumption that the Negro's word was as valid as a white man's in matters of law, and that he had the right to sue or be a witness in any matter of judicature.² It ordered that unless the regular judicial bodies rendered justice impartially to blacks as well as whites, the assistant commissioner should appoint judges and give them the power of decision in all cases in which a freedman was one of the parties.³

Conway did not believe the state or parish courts were adequate or capable to judge the colored class. The attitude of some civil officers did nothing to change that opinion. The mayor and judge in Alexandria said they would resign before allowing a Negro to witness in their court.⁴ Conway ordered, therefore, that the agents or provost marshals should consider the settlement of disputes as a part of their duties.⁵ The minor or provost courts could be composed of the freedmen's officer alone, or he

¹ *Annual Cyclopaedia*, III, 586-588.

² Hooper, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *loc. cit.*, 613.

³ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 9.

⁴ *New Orleans Times*, July 29, 1865.

⁵ Conway Circular, in *ibid.*, July 17, 1865.

could associate others with him. Some consisted of the agent, a planter selected by the various employers, and a man chosen by the Negroes. Their jurisdiction was limited to cases which could be settled by a \$100 fine or thirty days or less in jail. Suits of a major character were sent to the United States or to the military courts.⁶ Justice to blacks was also to be administered by Bureau officials in towns and cities. No cases in which this class was a party were to be committed to the local civil agencies.⁷ General Canby upheld the Negro organization in this action and declared the state authorities should not interfere in any problems of the colored race.⁸

The assistant commissioner enforced the jurisdiction of his agency over the freedmen. When Mayor John Kennedy of New Orleans, as chief police magistrate, had a Negro sent to the workhouse for law violation, Conway forcibly took the matter out of his hands and was supported by Canby in the policy.⁹ The Bureau agent in Shreveport was more emphatic in his actions. When a court in that city tried and sentenced a colored man, this officer arrested the judge, jury, sheriff, and district attorney.¹⁰

Public sentiment was against the government's usurpation of power. Judges called it an unconstitutional action, and a newspaper stated that as free Negroes had received justice during many years, it should erase all doubt of the treatment which would be accorded to the former slaves by the civil judiciary.¹¹ General Howard decided to allow state tribunals to prove this equity and ordered that "wherever any judicial officer of the state arraigns and tries freedmen for alleged faults and shows by his proceedings that he is disposed to deal as justly with this class of persons as with white persons, no interference by any of the agents of this bureau will be allowed. The co-operation of such officers assists rather than retards the work."¹² Conway was then forced to allow civil officers to try Negroes, with his agency acting as a guardian to see that impartiality was accorded them.¹³ He ordered that all judges who agreed in writing to show equality before the law in

⁶ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 11, pp. 22, 23; Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 252.

⁷ Bureau Order, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 3, 1865.

⁸ *New York Daily Tribune*, August 15, 1865.

⁹ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 5, 1865.

¹⁰ *New York Daily Tribune*, September 25, 1865.

¹¹ Open Letter, in *New Orleans Times*, September 29, 1865; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 18, 1865.

¹² Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 21.

¹³ *New York Daily Tribune*, September 30, 1865.

cases of colored people would be allowed to try them. Where they did not so agree, however, his officials would continue courts in connection with their offices.¹⁴ This circular met with good response. The arbitrators wished these extralegal tribunals abolished as they created a judicial tangle, and, also, some were presided over by agents who showed favoritism toward the blacks.¹⁵

Fullerton believed that all laws should be stretched to cover both races. He saw no reason why the freedmen should be pampered.¹⁶ Therefore, when an act had been passed which opened all courts to Negro suits and testimony, he abolished all Bureau provost tribunals and ordered officers to discontinue arrests and other interference.¹⁷ Agents were still, however, to act as attorneys and counselors for the blacks, and if the civil officials failed in their duty, to prefer charges against them through the military.¹⁸ Owners were also not allowed to sue for damages to abandoned property or recovery of rents from colored lessees, as the government was a party in such suits.¹⁹ When the assistant commissioner was reproached for his actions and told that even though the Negro's testimony was allowed he would not secure equity, he replied, "The law guarantees them a civil right, and if it is wrongfully refused they should contend for it. If they do not do so now, the law may become a dead letter on the statute books. It is far better that a few should suffer from the injustice of some state courts than that all should not be allowed to testify and sue in the same."²⁰

During 1866 Bureau courts were still functioning in many sections, although their numbers had diminished.²¹ Local agents also acted as arbitrators of minor disputes and were ordered to send reports every three months on the number of these cases they had settled.²² The state tribunals were not considered entirely adequate at the time. The Negro paper at New Orleans said the police of that city made periodic raids on Negro coffee-houses and made wholesale arrests, and ended by saying: "Give us real freedom, or allow us to still call Louisiana a slave state."²³

¹⁴ Conway Notice, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 26, 1865.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, October 8, 1865; *Franklin Planters' Banner*, quoted in *ibid.*, September 29, 1865.

¹⁶ Fullerton Report, in *New York Times*, December 31, 1865.

¹⁷ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 27.

¹⁸ Fullerton Order, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 29, 1865.

¹⁹ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 35.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 399.

²¹ *Annual Cyclopaedia*, VI, 336.

²² Baird Circular, in *New Orleans Price-Current*, January 17, 1866.

²³ *New Orleans Tribune*, March 7, 1866.

Baird said there was an insufficient number of soldiers to enforce regulations and protect the freedmen in the entire state and had several judges arrested under authority of the civil rights law.²⁴

When General Sheridan became head of the government agency, he wanted the civil officers to have control, subject only to government scrutiny. He contended, however, that interference was necessary to promote justice.²⁵ Said he, "the trial of a white man for the killing of a freedman can, in the existing state of society in this state, be nothing more or less than a farce."²⁶ Yet, the reports from the various parishes would tend to show that, on the whole, the Negroes were being treated justly. It appeared that the people who caused trouble were not the big planters, but the small owners and the poor white class.²⁷ In cases where these persons refused to give the black man his due, the agent would appear as the attorney for the colored man and either succeed in getting equal treatment or call in the military.²⁸ Sheridan's attitude may have been caused, in part, by the delay. The *Opelousas Courier* stated that the district courts had their dockets so crowded with Negro cases that a person might remain in jail for three months before going on trial. It hoped that some limited court could be established to handle the minor suits.²⁹

Under the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 the judicial functions of the Bureau ceased as far as organized tribunals were concerned. It did, however, refer many cases to the military,³⁰ and attempted to settle as many disputes out of court as possible. It also had power to seize property as security for wages.³¹ During the political upheaval of that year and 1868, there was a great deal of complaint about the negligence of the civil officers. They were accused of delaying cases, neglecting complaints, and requiring excessive security from the colored class. Much of the blame for this was directed at the vigilance committees and secret societies. After the election there appeared to have been less cause for resentment.³²

²⁴ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 287.

²⁵ Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 2 vols. (New York, 1888), II, 260, 261.

²⁶ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 743.

²⁷ Howard Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 6, pp. 37, 38.

²⁸ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 742.

²⁹ *Opelousas Courier*, November 24, 1866.

³⁰ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 1, pp. 621, 682.

³¹ Wood Circular, in *New Orleans Crescent*, December 20, 1867.

³² Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, pp. 1050, 1051.

The two problems of vagrancy and apprenticeship were subjects of Bureau regulation. Of the two, the vagrancy question was the most vexatious. F. B. Zincke noticed that each town with a freedmen's office was crowded with idle blacks.³³ One Union officer also complained of the laxity of vagrancy laws,³⁴ and the newspapers discussed the situation on many occasions. Conway thought the condition was overstated and easily controlled,³⁵ but Fullerton ordered all vagrants to be arrested and delivered into the Bureau's care.³⁶ This order was abused by the city police and revoked in two days,³⁷ but a system of arrest continued whereby idleness was subject to six months' imprisonment. Those convicted were then paroled and given employment.³⁸

General Howard ordered officers of the Department to act as guardians for all Negro minors and prevent their exploitation by either employers or parents.³⁹ Orphans and minors whose parents consented could be apprenticed to reliable employers. These terms expired at the age of eighteen for boys and fifteen for girls.⁴⁰ Fullerton enlarged on this action and made indenture practically compulsory for orphans.⁴¹ When Baird formulated the labor code which was continued by later commissioners, he continued the system in regard to orphans. Parents were, however, to decide for their children.⁴²

The moral relationships of Negroes were very loose after the war. This was especially true of their regard for the marriage vows.⁴³ To eliminate this condition, the Bureau agents made records of all marriages and reported them to headquarters.⁴⁴ A set of rules was formulated which were to be used as a guide by the official and freedman: There should be no marriage of mental deficient, children under twelve if a girl, or fourteen if a boy, or members of the immediate family. A license had to be procured, and the nuptials performed by a minister, justice of the peace, or a Bureau agent. The sacrament could be broken only

³³ F. B. Zincke, *Last Winter in the United States* (London, 1868), 92.

³⁴ Letter, in *New Orleans Times*, October 10, 1865.

³⁵ Conway Letter, in *ibid.*, August 29, 1865; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August 3, 1865.

³⁶ *New York Daily Tribune*, October 28, 1865.

³⁷ Fullerton Report, in *New York Times*, December 31, 1865.

³⁸ Fullerton Circular, in *New Orleans Times*, November 2, 1865.

³⁹ *New Orleans Times*, October 6, 1865.

⁴⁰ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 28.

⁴¹ Fullerton Report, in *New York Times*, December 31, 1865.

⁴² See Baird Code in Chapter IV, above.

⁴³ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1051.

⁴⁴ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, October 3, 1865.

by death, divorce, or annulment, and ten months had to elapse between marriages. All former children would be made legitimate by an immediate ceremony.⁴⁵ The colored class did not appear to have much interest in a supervision of morals. Although it was stated as many as twenty couples were united in wedlock at a time, many did not wish the ceremony and had to be told it was one of the requirements of freedom before acquiescing.⁴⁶

There was no direct connection between the Bureau and any banking institution. General Banks had included such an establishment in his organization plans of 1863, but there is no record that the later freedmen's agency inherited this activity from the military.⁴⁷ This was true also of the "Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company," established on March 3, 1865, with a main office in the city of Washington.⁴⁸ Howard called it "an auxiliary to the Freedmen's Bureau,"⁴⁹ and that organization aided it in many ways—it was even stated that it paid the rent of the bank buildings⁵⁰—but its functions were independent. There was a branch of this bank opened at 114 Carondelet Street in New Orleans on June 4, 1866, with W. R. Crane as chairman and O. J. Dunn as secretary of the advisory board.⁵¹ It paid interest on deposits of one dollar and upwards and invested all funds in securities of the United States.⁵² In March, 1870, this institution with C. S. Sauvinet as cashier had \$184,795.65 on deposit and, with the exception of the branch at Washington, was the largest of the banks.⁵³ Fleming called it one of the few sensible attempts made to assist the Negro,⁵⁴ and Booker T. Washington said its failure in 1874 was a crushing blow to the black race.⁵⁵

The assistant commissioner was charged with all funds receivable or payable in his territory and was not allowed to draw upon his bank deposits over the amount of the estimate.⁵⁶ In March, 1866, financial business was increased as the Negro agency was given supervision over bounty claims. To handle this

⁴⁵ Baird Circular, in *ibid.*, April 7, 1866.

⁴⁶ *National Intelligencer*, quoted in *West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter*, June 16, 1866.

⁴⁷ *Annual Cyclopaedia*, III, 595.

⁴⁸ *Congressional Globe*, 38 Cong., 2 Sess., Pt. II, Appen., 142.

⁴⁹ Fleming, *Reconstruction of the Seceded States*, 74.

⁵⁰ Howard Investigation, in *Reports of Committees*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 12, p. 48.

⁵¹ Advertisement, in *New Orleans Tribune*, June 2, 1866.

⁵² *Ibid.*, January 19, 1867.

⁵³ Howard Investigation, in *Reports of Committees*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 121, p. 51.

⁵⁴ Walter L. Fleming, "The Freedmen's Savings Banks," *Yale Review*, XV (1906), 40.

⁵⁵ Washington, *Story of the Negro*, II, 214.

⁵⁶ Howard Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 70, p. 25.

task a claim division was begun in the land department.⁵⁷ This division did much more in 1867 than in the previous year.⁵⁸ In March of that year Congress, by joint resolution, decided that all bounty or claim money should be paid directly to the Bureau, which would make the settlements and prevent fraud.⁵⁹ On July 6, 1865, this act was expanded into a law which made the freedmen's department the sole distributor of all government debts to the colored race. It continued this function until its transfer to the military in 1872.⁶⁰

For four years the Bureau acted as an almost complete government for the black race, and for practically four more it supervised some phases of Negro activity. During this time it faced continual opposition both from within and without the organization. John W. Burgess says it "was a greater source of irritation in the South than was the presence of the United States army."⁶¹ Booker T. Washington considered this "unfortunate because, during the four years of its existence the freedmen had learned to look to this Bureau and its representatives for leading, support, and protection. The whole South has suffered from the fact that the former slaves were first introduced into political life as the opponents, instead of the political supporters, of their former masters. No part of the South has suffered more on this account, however, than the negroes themselves."⁶²

Both planters and newspapers repeatedly clamored for removal of the freedmen's agency. There seemed to be no Democratic paper in the state which favored its existence though some of its policies were applauded. New Orleans papers such as the *Crescent*, *Daily Picayune*, *Price-Current*, and *Times* were all against it. The *Crescent* called it "a sham based on shams, the humbug of humbugs, having no necessity for its establishment, no wisdom in its prescriptions, no merit in its motives, no talent in its execution, no good in its results,"⁶³ and the *Picayune* said it enslaved the blacks as thoroughly as they were before the war,

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 1, p. 1017.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2 Sess., No. 1, p. 622.

⁵⁹ *Report of Secretary of War for 1870*, p. 316.

⁶⁰ Howard Investigation, in *Reports of Committees*, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 121, p. 26.

⁶¹ John W. Burgess, *Reconstruction and the Constitution* (New York, 1907), 89.

⁶² Washington, *Story of the Negro*, II, 13.

⁶³ Editorial, in *New Orleans Crescent*, January 6, 1867.

but to a different type of master.⁶⁴ Union men showed opposition also. B. C. Truman, although admitting the necessity of the organization directly after the war, thought it had accomplished its purpose by 1867.⁶⁵ General Henry Slocum called it a nuisance,⁶⁶ and Howard said that President Johnson opposed it by indirect means almost from its inception.⁶⁷ On the other hand, men such as Schurz and the assistant commissioners from Conway to Hatch advocated a continuance of the Negro department.⁶⁸ Trowbridge said Northerners felt its end would mean that they would have to leave also,⁶⁹ and William Sinclair thought Louisiana needed regulation more than most states of the South.⁷⁰

It has been shown how the Bureau regulated and supervised the activities of some 400,000 members of the black race within the state—promoting their education, ministering to their needs, protecting their rights, and adjusting their methods of labor. Approbation of its wise policies was, on the whole, obstructed by a hatred of the entire movement of government domination, and an antipathy engendered by the unwise actions of many lower officials who attempted to gain social equality for the former slave when he desired only to gain personal freedom.

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⁶⁴ Editorial, in *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 30, 1866.

⁶⁵ Truman Report, in *Senate Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 43, pp. 13, 14.

⁶⁶ *New Orleans Times*, October 15, 1865.

⁶⁷ Howard, *Autobiography*, II, 228.

⁶⁸ *New Orleans Crescent*, November 3, 1868; Schurz Report, in *House Executive Documents*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2, p. 20.

⁶⁹ Trowbridge, *Picture of the Desolated States*, 409.

⁷⁰ William A. Sinclair, *The Aftermath of Slavery* (Boston, 1905), 94-97.

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A Letter from the Battle of New Orleans

The following letter of John A. Fort, 2nd. in Command of Troop of Horse, posted on Left of Battle Line at Chalmette, January 8, 1815, was sent to me by Mr. Harrison Stewart of New York. I feel that so important an original muniment of the most unique, if not the greatest, military victory in our history should be preserved for future scholarship.

E. A. Parsons

New Orleans 28, January, 1815

Dear Brother

I write you by the first mail since my return from camp, we are not yet discharged but have fair prospects of soon returning to private life and to our business—the enemy have retreated to Their shipping and are supposed to be making off—there never was an army of Ten thousand men better disciplined appointed and equipped, there never was an army more determined and desperate and there never was an army more terribly Beaten, and what adds most to our triumph is that we have suffered no comparative loss—the Battle of the 8th. will always be present to my sight, I was Second in Command of a troop of Horse posted on the left of our line. The Tennessee Riflemen in our front arranged at the Breast work four deep, the best marksmen in front and the two rear ranks loading and such a Blaze of fire was perhaps never seen by man, the Enemy advanced in Column with their Choice Scotch Regiments Resolute and firm but they fell in heaps before a single man could reach the intrenchment—one of our troopers was killed—Brother Peter was with the City Riflemen on the extreme right when they also advanced in Column, the Sharp Shooters there saved the Right from being turned—Clement is almost well of his wound.

Genl. Jackson's official account of the Campaign will no doubt reach you before this can come to hand.

My love to Sister Helen and the family and accept for yourself my wishes as also for our friends at Rumarpo.

Affectionately yours
John A. Fort

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED
BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS
OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946, of the Louisiana Historical Quarterly, published
quarterly at New Orleans, Louisiana, for October 1, 1948.

State of Louisiana
Parish of East Baton Rouge } ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and parish aforesaid, personally appeared Walter Prichard, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of the Louisiana Historical Quarterly and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations), to-wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:

Publisher, The Louisiana Historical Society, New Orleans, La.; Editor, Walter Prichard, University Station, Baton Rouge, La.; Managing Editor, None; Business Manager, None.

2. That the owner is The Louisiana Historical Society, New Orleans, La.

There are no stockholders. The officers are: Edward A. Parsons, President, New Orleans, La.; André Lafargue, First Vice-President, New Orleans, La.; Hugh M. Wilkinson, Second Vice-President, New Orleans, La.; Peter G. Cabral, Third Vice-President, New Orleans, La.; William A. Read, Vice-President, Baton Rouge, La.; Charles A. McCoy, Vice-President, Lake Charles, La.; James E. Winston, Archivist, New Orleans, La.; William Boizelle, Recording Secretary, New Orleans, La.; Henry M. Gill, Corresponding Secretary, New Orleans, La.; J. B. Donnes, Treasurer, New Orleans, La.; Walter Prichard, Editor, Baton Rouge, La.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, officers, etc., contain the full list of such; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which the said publication is published, managed and controlled.

(Signed) WALTER PRICHARD, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of September, 1948.

(SEAL)

JULIUS E. KNIGHT, Notary Public.
(My commission is for life.)